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WATERLOO:

THE DOWNFALL OF THE FIRST NAPOLEON.

The great phenomenon of war it is, this and this only, which keeps open in man a spiracle—an organ of respiration—for breathing a transcendent atmosphere, and dealing with an idea that else would perish—viz., the idea of mixed crusade and martyrdom, doing and suffering, that finds its realization in a battle such as that of Waterloo—viz., a battle fought for interests of the human *race*, felt even where they are not understood; so that the tutelary angel of man, when he traverses such a dreadful field, when he reads the distorted features, counts the ghastly ruins, sums the hidden anguish, and the harvests

"Of horror breathing from the silent ground,"

nevertheless, speaking as God's messenger, "blesses it and calls it very good."—THOMAS DE QUINCEY.

WATERLOO

THE

DOWNFALL OF THE FIRST NAPOLEON:

A HISTORY OF THE CAMPAIGN OF 1815.

BY

GEORGE HOOPER,

AUTHOR OF "THE ITALIAN CAMPAIGNS OF GENERAL BONAPARTE," "THE CAMPAIGN OF SEDAN," "WELLINGTON," ETC.

WITH MAP AND PLANS.

NEW EDITION, REVISED.

LONDON: GEORGE BELL AND SONS, YORK STREET,
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PREFACE.

THIS book, originally published in 1862, was written mainly because the author honestly believed that there was, then, no other on the subject in English, at once full, well-arranged, accurate, and adapted for general reading. Since that time several volumes have appeared, the most notable and valuable contributions having been supplied by General Sir James Shaw Kennedy, Colonel Charles Chesney, and General Sir Edward Hamley. The best earlier books were the volumes of Captain Siborne, so full of detail; and of foreign histories that of Colonel Charras, which, in spite of some errors, stands in the foremost rank as an authority. It has been thought expedient to reprint this history of the campaign of 1815, because copies of the first edition have long been unattainable, and because they are still in demand. No more need be said, except that there are some slight additions and a few corrections in the present edition, and that one chapter, dealing with the politics of 1862, having become obsolete, has been omitted.

G. H.

November, 1889.

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BOOK I.

THE ARMY RESTORES THE EMPEROR.

THE ARMY RESTORES THE EMPEROR.

CHAPTER I.

NAPOLEON AGAINST ALL EUROPE.

§ 1. *Napoleon's Relation to Europe in* 1815.

BEFORE undertaking to describe the campaign of 1815, the historian is bound to show why, when Napoleon returned from Elba to the Tuileries, the Governments of Europe did not recognize him as sovereign of France, and sit down in peace beside him; why the startling words "Napoleon has quitted Elba," followed in succession by the more startling words, "Napoleon has landed at Cannes," "Napoleon is in the Tuileries," were sufficient to produce instantaneously a vast league of nations and kings who vowed his destruction; and why, when conquered at Waterloo, and caught in the Basque Roads, the Powers, by common consent, transported him to St. Helena.

The reason is on the very surface of his history. Napoleon, far more than any French sovereign, was the living embodiment of certain passions and propensities of the French people. He was something more. Loving glory for glory's sake, even more than they loved it; thirsting for conquest, greedy of domination, in a greater

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degree than they; more rapid, more impetuous, more unscrupulous. In addition to all these passions and qualities, he possessed an Italian intellect, fertile, almost beyond example, in grand designs, and facile in devising original and effective modes of executing them. In him the military population of France found an idol to worship and a master to obey. He fed them with glory and plunder; they repaid him, for fourteen years, with unexampled devotion. He has been called the Sword of Democracy, and so he may have appeared to the vain multitudes whom he led, over the wrecks of armies and the necks of kings, into all the great cities of continental Europe. But it was an illusion, unless democracy mean the sacrifice of the many to exalt the grandeur of one, the degradation of Europe, and the exaltation of France.

For fourteen years Napoleon, as First Consul and as Emperor, had played a part which developed every phase of his character. To found, upon a military basis, a gigantic continental empire, an "Empire of the West," and to control from the summit of his power the policy of nations unsubdued, was the ever present object which he bent all the energies of his vast genius to attain. It has been contended that this was not French, but Italian; that France never identified herself with his stupendous, but insane ambition. In its grandeur, the design of Napoleon was Italian; but it was also French, because the greater includes the less, and Napoleon only worked out, on a Roman scale, the projects of the smaller French mind of Louis XIV. To say that France did not identify herself with Napoleon so long as he furnished glory, territory, and plunder, is simply to assert what history contradicts. That exhausted France wearied of the burden laid upon her is true, but only when "le grand entrepreneur," as the workmen called him, had buried her armies in the snows

of Russia and the valleys of Spain, and had drawn the armies of Europe into her fertile fields and around her capital.

No; if a nation was ever identified with one man, France was and is identified with Napoleon; and that, for the reason already stated—he was a colossal embodiment, for good and evil, of her distinctive passions and propensities; her greatest "representative man," although he was not a Frenchman.

Experience has shown that the diverse races of Europe will not bear the domination of one man, or one nation, nor even the menace of that domination. Napoleon more nearly reached that dazzling height than any man of modern times. Had he committed no faults, had he perpetrated no crimes, he could not have retained the territory he occupied, nor the power he sought to grasp. But his career was not merely an exemplification of strength, nor of strength and beneficence. In the pursuit of self-aggrandisement he did not hesitate to violate every principle that binds society together. He was not content with conquering and ruling; he went further, he insulted and oppressed. Not a nation in Europe, save one, escaped the burden of his heavy oppression; not one escaped his insults. Every country but one furnished to his generals not only titles but fortunes. Even when at peace with his neighbours, those neighbours were not safe, for he sometimes openly annexed a State to the Empire, and sometimes sought in secret intrigues a pretext for spoliation. That he desired a kingdom or a republic to round his frontiers, or give effect to the policy he put in force against England, was a sufficient reason for him to take it. Spain, Holland, Liguria, the cities of the Elbe and the Baltic, furnish conspicuous examples of what he would do, and what he would permit to be done. He never entered into

negotiations for peace with a sincere desire of making peace, unless, if he were strong, upon his own terms, if he were weak, with the design of resuming the war when he had gathered together fresh strength. He conspired and warred perpetually against the independence and liberty of Europe, and yet Frenchmen are never tired of expressing their indignation at the consequence, that when its turn came Europe conspired and warred against him and them.

There were two distinct periods in the wars which began in 1792 and terminated in 1815. The first period includes the wars of the French Revolution, which were wars for existence, as well as wars for conquest. This period ended when Bonaparte returned from Egypt: The second period began with the victory of Marengo, and continued to the rout of Waterloo. This was a period during which France fought, not for existence, but for conquest. The wars of the French Revolution ended, and the wars of Napoleon began. He moulded, organized, directed the elements of force let loose by the passions of the Revolution, and with this force, developed systematically, he resumed on a grander scale the policy of Louis XIV. Napoleon became terrible to Europe because, in addition to his genius for war, (greater than that of any man then living,) he pursued with dazzling success a course in accordance with the perennial ambition of the French nation. Therein lay his strength. His career is an example of what France is ready to do again when she finds a real Napoleon to lead her. Wherefore, because Napoleon represented so faithfully and with such transcendent skill the passion of France for aggression, because he was insatiable and perfidious, and destitute of what men call moral principles, the sovereigns and statesmen who acted for the nations of Europe found it impossible to

trust him or exist in peace beside him. Hence he, and the policy he represented, were placed, and justly placed, under the ban of Europe.

Not without warning. In 1813-14 the Allies did not pursue the war to the utmost. Napoleon was offered more than one golden bridge. The terms of the peace of Frankfort were large; naturally the offers made at Chatillon were smaller than those at Frankfort, yet they were still large. Napoleon did not accept them because he believed, and believed to the last, that Fortune would not desert him. "La Fortune," he said, even on the eve of his embarkation from Elba, "ne m'a jamais abandonné dans les grandes occasions;"[1] words which showed a sublime confidence in himself, natural to one who could exclaim impiously, "Mon nom vivra autant que celui de Dieu."[2] Fortune deserted him at Fontainebleau, when even France had grown tired of sustaining a leader whose exaggeration of her passions brought Europe to the banks of the Seine. France submitted; Napoleon was permitted to maintain a show of state in Elba; the Bourbons returned to the Tuileries after an absence of more than twenty years; peace was made and proclaimed: and the task of re-arranging disordered Europe, or, as Metternich put it, distributing the spoils of the vanquished, fell to the lot of the conquerors.

The peace of Paris did not endure a year. Ten months of Bourbon rule, vengeful, implacable, stupid—alike violent in act and in language—sufficed to bring France once more to the brink of revolution. Yet Jaucourt wrote to Talleyrand, in January, 1815, "The age of fools of quality is past!" Two acts alone are sufficient to demonstrate the folly of the royalists—the resumption of the

[1] Fortune has never deserted me on great occasions.

[2] My name will live as long as that of God.

white flag, and the changing of the numbers of the regiments. A prudent king would have adopted the tricolour when he agreed to a constitutional charter, and would have refrained from wounding military sensibility by destroying the numbers of the regiments. But more stupid than these acts was the political policy pursued, a policy which aroused on all sides suspicions of what was worse than the grinding but gilded despotism of Napoleon —namely, that the Government favoured a forcible resumption of the confiscated lands, the restoration of tithes, and of the abolished exactions and imposts of feudalism. It has been surmised, and with much reason, that had Napoleon not reappeared a popular movement would have extorted from the king a really constitutional government. In that case France might have taken some real steps towards a free government, and the basis of liberty rather than of equality might have been laid.

§ 2. *Napoleon Returns from Elba.*

But while the Powers were wrangling at Vienna, and the Bourbons were irritating France, Napoleon was watching from Elba for the opportunity of resuming empire. It was not in the nature of the man to yield passively to anything, even to the inevitable. So long as a chance remained he looked out keenly for the propitious hour. He selected Elba as a residence, because thence "he could keep an eye upon France and upon the Bourbons." It was his duty, he said, to guard the throne of France for his family and for his son. Thus, in making peace at Fontainebleau, he only bowed to a storm he could not then resist, and cherished in his mind the project of an imperial restoration.

The hour for which he waited came at length. In

February, 1815, he had arrived at the conclusion that with the aid of the army he could overthrow the Bourbons, whose government, he said, was good for priests, nobles, and countesses of the old time, but worth nothing to the living generation. The army, he knew, was still, and would be always, devoted to him. "Nos victoires et nos malheurs," he said, "ont établi entre elle et moi un lien indestructible; avec moi seul elle peut retrouver la vengeance, la puissance, et la gloire:"[1] words which prove how steadfastly he adhered to the design of re-establishing his military power, if not pre-eminence. "C'est moi," he cried, in a moment of confidence, "qui suis cause des malheurs de la France; c'est moi qui dois les réparer."[2] He had weighed all the chances for and against the success of his enterprise, and he had arrived at the conclusion that he should succeed; for "Fortune had never deserted him on great occasions." It has been said that his departure was precipitated by a report of the dissolution of the Congress of Vienna; but this cannot have been the case, since he had calculated that although, in deferring his departure "until the Congress had dissolved," he would gain an advantage; yet that on the other hand, by delay, he saw the risk of being closely watched both by the cruisers of England and France. So that he quitted Elba with the knowledge, or at all events under the belief, that the Congress had not dissolved. What he may have believed was that the sovereigns had quitted Vienna. It is possible, indeed, that the rumour of an intention to confine him upon an island in the Atlantic may have exercised some influence over him; but the real reasons for the selection

[1] Our victories and misfortunes have established between me and the army an indestructible bond; with me alone the army can obtain once more vengeance, power, and glory.

[2] I caused the misfortunes of France; I ought to repair them.

of the 26th of February were that he was tired of inactivity, and convinced that the favourable moment had arrived. Therefore, instructing Murat to second him by assuming a strong position in front of Ancona, he embarked his faithful Thousand, and set sail for France. On the 1st of March he landed on the shores of the Gulf of Juan, and on the 20th he entered the Tuileries. As he had predicted, the army rallied to the tricolour; the generals could neither restrain nor guide their soldiers; the Bourbon dukes and princes, and the brave Duchess of Angoulême—"the only man of the family"—were utterly powerless before the universal military disaffection; and one after the other they were chased out of France. The army had restored Napoleon.

Louis XVIII. drove out of Paris by the road to St. Denis on the 19th, a few hours before Napoleon, on the 20th, drove in by the Barrier of Italy; and on the 23rd, after a short stay at Lille, the King was safe in Ghent. "The great question is," wrote Lord Castlereagh to the Duke of Wellington three days afterwards, while yet in ignorance of the event, "can the Bourbons get Frenchmen to fight *for them* against Frenchmen?" The result showed that they could not. In the then state of France the army was master of France.[1] Louis and his ministers had done nothing to conciliate, and almost everything to irritate, the people; and even so early as November, 1814, Wellington did not see what means the King had of resisting the attack of a few hundred officers determined to risk everything.

During the period occupied by Napoleon in passing from Elba to Paris, the conduct of the sovereigns and diplomatists

[1] "France desires peace; the Army wants Belgium." Jaucourt to Talleyrand, January 20th, 1815.

assembled at Vienna offered a striking contrast to the weakness and inaptitude of the Bourbons. Deep dissension lurked amidst the gaiety and splendour which prevailed during their long sojourn in the Austrian capital, and the sunny surface concealed the elements of a probable collision. Europe was full of soldiers. France, England, Austria, were bound by a secret treaty to resist the pretensions of Russia and Prussia to the tempting spoils offered by the powerlessness of Poland and Saxony; and the unsettled condition of Italy seemed likely to furnish new subjects of difference, and to increase the angry feelings of the triumphant Powers. The news of Napoleon's departure from Elba drew them once more together. Napoleon says that there was doubt and hesitation at Vienna, and that the sovereigns only resolved on resistance when they heard that Murat had begun the war in Italy. This assertion is unfounded, since the Congress had determined what to do long before Murat appealed to arms. "When Buonaparte left Elba for France," said the Duke of Wellington to Mr. Rogers, "I was at Vienna, and received [on the 7th of March] the news from Lord Burghersh, our Minister at Florence. The instant it came I communicated it to every member of the Congress, and all laughed; the Emperor of Russia most of all. 'What was in your letter to his Majesty this morning,' said his Majesty's physician, 'for when he broke the seal he clapped his hands and burst out laughing?' Various were the conjectures as to whither he was gone; but none would hear of France. All were sure that in France he would be massacred by the people when he appeared there. I remember Talleyrand's words so well—'Pour la France—non.'"[1] Lord Clancarty, in a

[1] Metternich, in his Autobiography, reports the following "laconic conversation," as he calls it:—

"*Talleyrand.* Do you know where Napoleon has gone.

letter to Lord Castlereagh on the 11th, describes a different aspect of the scene. "We were at Court," he writes, "on the night of the arrival of Burghersh's despatch containing the news of Buonaparte's flight, and though there was every attempt to conceal apprehension under the mask of unconcern [of laughter for instance], it was not difficult to perceive that fear was predominant in all the imperial and royal personages there assembled; and, however much their principal officers endeavoured to make light of the event, the task of disguise was too heavy for them." Nevertheless, the Duke of Wellington has recorded that he found among the principal sovereigns "one prevailing sentiment —a determination to unite their efforts to support the system established by the Peace of Paris;" and he never doubted that if Napoleon succeeded in regaining a footing in France, "such a force would be assembled by the Powers of Europe, directed by such a spirit in their councils, as must get the better of him." That there was fear in Vienna is manifest, but the acts of the Allied Powers show that fear speedily gave place to resolution. For, as early as the 12th of March, before the Allies knew where Napoleon was, or anything about him, except that he was somewhere at large in France, they drew up that famous declaration, and signed it the next day, in which they declared that he had broken the sole legal tie to which his existence was attached, and that it was possible to keep with him "neither peace nor truce." "The Powers, in consequence," so runs this document, "declare that Napoleon Buonaparte is placed beyond the pale of civil and social relations, and that, as a common enemy and disturber of the peace of the world, he

Moi. The report tells nothing.

Talleyrand. He will land somewhere on the Italian coast, and make for Switzerland.

Moi. He will go straight to Paris."

has delivered himself over to public justice." This declaration, which has been the subject of vehement criticism, was the natural consequence of the prevailing and correct appreciation of Napoleon's character. There was not a nation in Europe which felt the slightest particle of confidence or trust in him. Hence this declaration, made so promptly, was drawn up in ignorance of any professions he might make, because, beforehand, Europe felt that no professions of his could be relied on. The news of his success was followed by a treaty, adopted on the 25th of March, renewing the alliance of Chaumont, whereby Great Britain, Russia, Austria, and Prussia bound themselves to provide each 150,000 men; to employ, in addition, all their resources, and to work together for the common end—the maintenance of the Treaty of Paris, and of the stipulations determined on and signed at the Congress of Vienna. Further, they engaged not to lay down their arms but by common consent; nor before the object of the war should have been attained; nor, continues the document, "until Buonaparte shall have been rendered absolutely unable to create disturbance, and to renew attempts for possessing himself of supreme power in France." All the Powers of Europe generally, and Louis XVIII. specially, were invited to accede to the treaty; but, at the instance of Lord Castlereagh, the Four Great Powers declared in the most solemn manner that, although they desired to see his Most Christian Majesty restored to the throne, and also to contribute to that "auspicious result," yet that their "principles" would not permit them to prosecute the war "with a view of imposing any particular Government on France." With Napoleon they refused to hold any communication whatever; and when he sent couriers to announce that he intended to observe existing treaties, they were stopped on the frontiers. The serious differences which threatened

disunion among the Allies had been settled speedily under the pressure of the feeling of common danger, and each Government now set to work to fulfil the condition of the new compact. Wellington, on his own responsibility, acted for England, signed treaties, undertook heavy engagements in her name, and agreed to command an army to be assembled in Belgium; and having satisfied, as well as he could, the clamour of "all" for subsidies from England, he took his departure from Vienna on the 29th of March, and arrived in Brussels on the 4th of April.

The British Parliament and nation confirmed readily the proceedings of the Government and of the Duke of Wellington at Vienna. There was, indeed, a small party anxious to give Napoleon another trial; but it was admitted candidly, even by these, that "Buonaparte was not sincere in his professions of moderation." Yet, in spite of this belief, they were willing to trust him with opportunities of future mischief. Their plea was, that by recognizing him as sovereign of France the constitutional party, without whom, they said, he could not carry on the government, would be enabled to exact adequate securities, and obtain such an ascendency in his councils as would prevent him from renewing his career of conquest. But the obvious answer to this was that, for the maintenance of peace upon the bases adopted at Paris and Vienna, the nations of Europe had absolutely no guarantee except the worthless promise of the man whose very exclusion from power in France was the fundamental principle of the Treaty of Paris. By receiving back Napoleon, France, as the Allies averred, had broken that treaty, and had declared war against Europe. The possibility of a constitutional party struggling with any success against the Emperor at the head of his army, was far too shadowy a ground upon which to rest an European peace. Consequently, had

Napoleon been recognized, there would not have been peace, but merely an armed truce in Europe, fruitful in anxieties and ruinous in cost. It was, therefore, better to undertake at once a decisive war, and build a permanent settlement thereon, than to maintain large armies and navies for the purpose of frustrating, under less favourable circumstances, the ambitious projects which Napoleon was known to cherish. Lord Grey, indeed, frankly based his opposition to immediate war on the ground that it was unjustifiable to declare Bonaparte personally excluded from the throne of France; and he further contended that, although peace with Bonaparte on the throne was "extremely doubtful," yet the utmost that Europe was justified in doing was to make vigorous preparations, and renew the concert of 1814 on a "principle purely defensive." This view, adopted by a portion only of the Whig party, was expounded in Parliament, but, happily, it did not prevail. On the contrary, the sound policy of war with Napoleon at once was supported by overwhelming majorities in Parliament, and by a majority, equally overwhelming, in the country. It had long ceased to be a party question. The instinct of the nation ratified the energetic course initiated so promptly by the statesmen at Vienna.

There was, indeed, a weak place in the policy of the Allies. To declare that they would make neither peace nor truce with Napoleon, was perfectly sound and just. To declare that they did not undertake the war with a view of imposing any particular Government on France, placed them in a false position. They rendered themselves liable, it was almost inevitable that they would be compelled, by the course of events, to give, in acts, the lie to this verbal declaration. For to execute justice was to pave the way for the restoration of Louis XVIII. The young Napoleon, with a Regency, was incompatible with the Treaty of Paris and

with the maintenance of peace; and, by a foregone conclusion, the Duke of Orleans was excluded from the throne. Therefore, the restoration of Louis XVIII. became an inevitable consequence of victory, and the war in which they were about to engage ran the risk of appearing, and did appear to many, to be a war for the restoration of the Bourbons, waged on the pretext of the necessity of destroying the political and military power of Napoleon. Yet this was not so. The real object of the war was the destruction of Napoleon. For no other object could the mass of European force have been brought together. The Duke of Wellington felt keenly the embarrassment thus occasioned by Lord Castlereagh's specious declaration. "I wish that our Government and yours," he wrote to Metternich on the 20th of May, "had found themselves in a situation to let their people know for what they were to fight; and that we had not been induced to hold out to their imaginations the possibility that the people of France, having had a fair opportunity of choosing whom they pleased, under what form they pleased, in 1814, might perform the same ceremony again in 1815. However, I cannot judge so well upon this point as those upon the spot; and probably neither you nor we could venture to depart, although only in words, from the principle on which we acted in the former war. I have frequently told your Highness, and every day's experience shows me that I am right, that the only chance of peace for Europe consists in the establishment in France of the legitimate Bourbons. The establishment of any other government," he adds, "must lead to the maintenance of large military establishments, to the ruin of all the Governments of Europe, till it shall suit the convenience of the French Government to commence a contest which can only be directed against *you*, or others for whom we are interested." Practically, the Allies were resolved, at any cost,

to overthrow Napoleon; at the same time they favoured the cause of Louis XVIII., and allowed him to accede to the treaty of the 25th of March. If France should accept Louis as King, less onerous guarantees would be demanded from her, when peace should be made, than if she were to choose any other person. Europe had a right to dictate what conditions she pleased.

Napoleon, on his side, essayed to prove that, as he, in the exercise of his sovereign rights, had dispossessed the Bourbons of the reins of Government, and seized them himself with the consent of the nation, he was the legitimate ruler of France, and that, therefore, the declaration of the 13th of March did not apply to him. To this the Allies replied, by citing the first article of the Convention of the 11th of April, 1814, wherein "the Emperor Napoleon, for himself and his successors and descendants, as well as for all the members of his family, renounced all rights of sovereignty and domination, as well over the French Empire and the Kingdom of Italy as over every other country." Nevertheless, he had resumed by force what he had renounced by convention, and had thus broken the basis of the arrangement between himself and the Allies. He could not, therefore, plead the wrong he had done in justification of that wrong. And if the French people had really selected Napoleon as their ruler, then they had broken the treaties of 1814 by choosing a sovereign whose former career and recent acts had proved him to be incompatible with the independence and tranquillity of Europe. These arguments can only be met by assertions like that of Lord Grey, who said the right of a people to choose its own Government is so sacred that under no circumstances should it be infringed. A wholesome principle of international law, but one not applicable to the condition in which Europe found herself in the spring of 1815.

Napoleon, loud in his professions of peace, offered to ratify the Treaty of Paris—an offer which implied the invalidity of that instrument without his ratification. Yet, as we have seen, the base on which that treaty rested was the exclusion of Napoleon himself from the throne. How, then, could he be sincere? The treaty was at an end when he entered the Tuileries, and the Allies took a just and practical view of the necessities of the case when they declared that the question then was—not to *maintain* but to *re-make* the treaty—a question of political calculation and foresight, in dealing with which the Allies had only to consult the real interests of each nation, and the common interests of Europe. Napoleon, they said justly, had "no guarantee to give but his word, and who, after the cruel experience of fifteen years, would have the courage to accept a guarantee like that?"

Moreover, in the very midst of the discussion, Murat, acting on the advice of Napoleon, established his forces in front of Ancona, and, going beyond his instructions—acting, indeed, contrary to them—instead of waiting to be attacked, and then retiring upon the Garigliano, he began war on his own account, intent on making himself King of Italy. Here was fresh proof of the dangers in store for Europe. Wellington was of opinion that if Murat were not speedily defeated, he would save Bonaparte. But the campaign of the King of Naples was short-lived. It began on the 31st of March, and in less than six weeks King Joachim was an exile, and part of the troops engaged against him were free to cross the Alps and enter France. Napoleon was, therefore, left absolutely alone in his strife with Europe.

§ 3. *Napoleon's Political Calculations.*

He was perfectly aware of it. From the moment when, having communicated to the Emperor Alexander a copy of the secret treaty of the 3rd of January, which had been left in the French Foreign-office by the fugitive Government, he found that the knowledge of its contents did not detach the Czar from the Allies; he knew that he had nothing to hope for in any other quarter. His wife refused to return to him; his son was in the hands of the Austrian Emperor; the hostile passions of the German nation were at a white heat; England was as resolute as ever; and Alexander himself had denounced Napoleon to his soldiers as "the vile and criminal artificer of fraud," "the scourge of the human race." Napoleon knew he had no alternative but to prepare for a vigorous resistance or a vigorous offensive. "I desire peace, and I can only obtain it by means of victories," he said to Benjamin Constant. "I do not wish to give you false hopes; I allow it to be said that negotiations are in progress. Nothing of the sort! I foresee a difficult struggle, a long war." And for this war he prepared.

Napoleon's partisans have always insisted that he returned from Elba chastened by adversity; that he saw the folly of his long career of conquest; that he had become, if not the warm lover, at least the judicious friend of liberty; and that above all he desired peace, in order that France might recover from the misfortunes he had inflicted upon her. 'Alas! it is a French delusion. Napoleon had suffered severely from *ennui* and idleness in Elba, and had reflected upon the causes of his fall. He had seen how eagerly France had accepted a charter from the Bourbons, and how deeply the French resented the conduct of the Bourbons in violating its letter and spirit. Sure of the army, he had

bent his mind to discover how he could secure the attachment of the people. He could not give less than the Bourbons had given, constitutional liberty; and all he required was to keep the nation in good humour until victory had secured him from the hostility and power of Europe, and had made him master of France. He wanted time to reorganize an army, for, once having a subservient soldiery, who in France could resist his will? The return of Louis XVIII. as a constitutional king had, as he declared, created a "new situation." Napoleon was, what he aptly described himself to be, "rien qu'un être politique." Therefore, he inquired, what line of conduct would be most in harmony with these new circumstances? Napoleon was not long in discovering one thing;—that the Emperor must become a Liberal. Benjamin Constant has recorded that in his interviews with him, Napoleon did not assume the character of a man corrected by adversity; of one who adopted Liberal views by inclination. He was a Liberal from calculation. "He examined coldly in his own interests, with an impartiality approaching to indifference, that which was possible and preferable." He believed that "the taste for constitutions, debates, harangues," had come back again in France; but he asserted distinctly that it was only the few who were suffering from this disease, and that the people desired him, and him alone. He was still the Emperor of the soldiers, the peasants, and the plebeians of France. Nevertheless, for the moment, active public opinion desired liberty; liberty was the trump-card of that moment, as victory, glory, would be the trump-card of the next. Hence, he cried, "Public discussions, free elections, responsible ministers, liberty of the press—I desire all that!" "The repose of a constitutional king will suit me; and will suit my son better." Napoleon a constitutional king, acting through a responsible ministry! It may be

possible to conceive it; but it is impossible to believe it. He put on the toga of the Tribune to cover the robes of the Emperor, just as, a little later, at the Champ de Mai, his imperial garments, dropping from his shoulders, disclosed the uniform and arms of the Chasseurs of the Guard. Napoleon's constitutionalism was simply a piece of political manœuvring. He had counted his forces, he had surveyed the political map, and he had calculated that the line of operation most likely to give him vantage ground, and the time he required to rebuild the Imperial edifice, would be to assume the part of a constitutionalist, and to adopt the phrases of that sect. The famous "Acte Additionnel," that is, an act added to the Imperial constitutions, was the fruit of this calculation. But even during the discussion in the Council of State upon the draft of its clauses, the Emperor could not sustain his part. He was urged to embody in his Acte the article of the Charter abolishing confiscation. He had already, by decree, confiscated the property of several public enemies, and he refused with acrimony.

"You thrust me," he said, "into a path which is not mine. You weaken, you fetter me. France seeks and does not find me. Public opinion was excellent; it is now execrable. France asks me what has become of the good right arm of the Emperor—this arm of which she has need to subdue Europe?" [The constitutional king disappears altogether.] "Why speak to me of goodness, of arbitrary justice, of natural laws? The first law is necessity; the first justice, public safety. You wish that the men whom I have loaded with wealth should use it to conspire against me abroad; this cannot, this shall not be. . . . . When peace is made, *nous verrons*. To each day its penalty, to each circumstance its law, to each one his nature. Mine is not that of an angel. I repeat it—you must find again,

you must see once more, the good right arm of the Emperor." Here spoke the veritable Napoleon. Just as before Europe, he professed peace, that he might gain time to prepare for hostilities, so, before France, he professed constitutional doctrines, that he might obtain present support, and gain time to restore imperialism on a foundation of successful war. It has been well said, and by a Frenchman, that it was not the Acte Additionnel which filled the public mind with suspicion—it was the author of the act. Proud of him as the champion of France in the lists of Europe, idolaters of his skill as a military leader, the French people had no confidence in Napoleon as a civil governor. They did not believe that he would respect the laws of his own creation. They did not believe that a despot of fifteen years' growth could suddenly become a constitutional king. And the passage we have cited shows that they were right in their suspicions. "Quand la paix sera faite, nous verrons," was a menace applying to more than the property of the adherents of Louis XVIII.; and the French were not slow to perceive that "the good right arm of the Emperor" was always uplifted behind the fragile constitution.

Napoleon had formed a Ministry on the very evening of his return to the Tuileries. To Fouché, who sought the office, he gave the Ministry of Police; to Decrès, the Ministry of Marine. He induced Davoust to accept the War Department, and persuaded Carnot to become his Home Minister. Caulaincourt had no faith in the duration of the galvanized empire; he was willing to command a division, but he only accepted, with reluctance, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Prince Cambacérès became Minister of Justice; Guadin Duke of Gaeta and Count Mollien, both men of business, were intrusted with the Departments of Finance. Lavalette, always faithful, replaced

the indiscreet Ferrand at the Post Office: Savary took command of the gendarmerie; the Duke of Bassano returned to his old post, Secretary of State; and Count Molé, at his own request, became Director of Public Works. Love of order was one of Napoleon's virtues; and having restored the political machine, he immediately turned his attention to the army.

He felt certain that war would ensue. Knowing that at the moment when he returned from Elba a large part of the best troops of England were in America, that the German force on the Rhine was weak, and that the Russian armies were in Poland, he calculated that the Allied Powers would not be in a position to open the campaign, at the earliest, until the middle of July; and, for a moment, he hoped that, by working on the feelings of his father-in-law, the Emperor of Austria, and by rousing the anger of the Emperor Alexander against his allies, he would be able, if not to reduce his enemies to two, England and Prussia, at least to defer the period of hostilities until the autumn. Whatever might be the value of this calculation, he determined to raise as large a force as possible by the earliest time when he supposed hostilities could commence; and he intended, if hostilities were postponed until the autumn, to have 800,000 men under arms. His hopes were not fulfilled: the Allies worked with more unity and energy than he had anticipated. Before his great schemes of military preparation were half complete he found himself compelled by events to begin the war.

§ 4. *His Resources and Exertions.*

What he actually did accomplish between March and June has been the subject of fierce controversy. His friends exaggerate, his enemies undervalue, his exertions

and their results. But no candid inquirer can fail to see, that if his energetic activity during this period is far below that of the Convention when threatened by Europe, it is far above the standard fixed by his passionate critics. The real reason why he failed to raise a larger military force during the hundred days was that his genius worked upon exhausted materials. The nation, to use an expressive vulgarism, was "used up." The Emperor did not appeal to the people, it is true, after the fashion of the Convention, but, had he done so, the results would not have been much changed; for, as we have said, France, in the first place, had been drained of men by fifteen years of destructive warfare; and in the second place, France was not only wearied of endless slaughter, but actually without the means to meet the heavy demands of renewed conscriptions. It is a significant fact that the proper conscription for 1815 had been levied in the autumn of 1813. The drafts on the rising generation had been anticipated, and hence there remained little available except the old soldiers. Another significant fact is, that the fédérés—a body of men who organized themselves spontaneously in many departments, who were for the most part unarmed, and whose purpose was to defend "Liberty and the Emperor" —consisted mainly of men who had served before. Napoleon's real resources were the prisoners of war, the veterans who had returned to France from distant garrisons at the conclusion of peace, the old soldiers who had quitted the army at various periods, the officers who had not arrived at the higher grades, and the generals who hoped to become marshals. The people, the bulk of the nation, shrank from military service. Even the hundreds of battalions of the National Guards directed to be organized, were, some never raised to the proper complement of men, nearly one-half never raised at all. In some

departments, the soldiers recalled to the eagles preferred flight to service, and were chased through the country side. The old days of the triumphant empire, fertile in glory, plunder, bâtons, crosses, national aggrandizement, presented no scenes like these. Even the regular regiments were incomplete; and the general officers were loud and frequent in their demands for more men, more arms, more horses, more uniforms, more equipments. General Rapp, for instance, commanding on the Rhine, after describing the enthusiasm of the people of Strasbourg and Mulhausen, says, "All this zeal, however, did not fill up my regiments —time passed, and recruits did not come in." He sent his "morning states" to the Emperor, who could not conceal his surprise, exclaiming, "So few! Alsace, so ardently patriotic! Never mind; victory will bring forth battalions." Again, at a later date, the Emperor wrote thus to his general,—"I am surprised that there are not more voluntary enlistments in Alsace." Rapp declares that, in obedience to Napoleon's orders, he drew every regular soldier out of the fortresses, and every effective from the depôts in his district; yet at the commencement of hostilities he mustered, instead of the 40,000 men promised by Napoleon, only 19,000 regulars and 3,000 national guards d'élite.

The result of Napoleon's prodigious exertions to augment the military force of France appears to be this: Napoleon found ready to his hand a force of 223,972[1] men of all arms,

[1] Beurnonville, who had means of knowing, using round numbers, informed Tallyrand, on the 26th of April, 1815, that when the king quitted Paris, the effective of his army was 150,000 men, all told, that "Bonaparte" had summoned the soldiers on leave, and that he might, thereby, secure 100,000 out of 106,000 called in, all seasoned soldiers. Beurnonville estimated that by the end of March Napoleon would have an effective force of 200,000 men. He had plenty of cannon, but, when

officers included, giving a disposable effective of 155,000 men ready to take the field. By the 13th of June he had raised this force to 276,982 men, officers included: that is, 247,609 of the Line, and 29,373 of the Imperial Guard. The number disposable for war was 198,130; and it therefore follows that Napoleon had increased the general effective by 53,010 men, and that part of it disposable for war by 43,130. But it is unfair to test the genius of Napoleon by this result. Why he did not succeed in raising more men has been already explained. It does not touch his reputation as an administrator; it does not diminish the credit which his partisans claim for his energy and industry and ability. For, during the period of preparation, he not only sustained a sharp conflict with the politicians, but he directed and completed the fortification and armament of the north side of Paris; supplied the first line of frontier fortresses with provisions for six months, and the fortresses of the other lines in proportion; threw up entrenched works round several provincial towns, and fortified the defiles of the Jura, the Vosges, and the Argonne; he succeeded in obtaining horses absolutely required for the cavalry and artillery, and supplied the latter with harness for nearly 600 guns; he more than doubled the number of effective muskets. In addition to this, he totally reorganized the army, revived the Imperial Guard, and provided for the increase of the regiments of the line from two to five battalions, thus giving employment to the half-pay officers, so discontented under the Bourbons; he restored to the regiments the old numbers so foolishly taken away; he added two squadrons to each regiment of cavalry; and he raised upwards of 200 battalions of National Guards.

Beurnonville left Paris, only 300,000 muskets over and above those in the hands of the 150,000 men ready to take the field.

In short, by unceasing labour, he mastered the whole military details of the empire; and, in so far as it was possible, he saw that what he ordered was done. No man could have effected more, few so much, with the same means in the same time.

For although Napoleon, speeding from town to town, and gathering round him, as he went, the soldiers who loved the eagles so well, was a grand and portentous figure of the melodramatic sort, yet, in reality, his triumph—the most showy in all his life—had nothing substantial about it except the sabres, bayonets, and cannon, and the hearts of the wreck of his great armies. The Emperor had appeared once more; but when he entered Paris he ceased to be Emperor. He had to compound and to temporize. Those writers alone take a correct view of the supreme crisis in the career of Napoleon who insist that his only chance of success against combined Europe was to be found in a revival of the old Committee of Public Safety, in an appeal to the revolutionary spirit, in an emphatic declaration that the country was in danger, and in rousing a whole people to arms. But these very writers forget that the wars of the Empire had exhausted the spirit as well as the body of the Revolution, and that no matter how imperiously the Emperor might have stamped his foot upon the soil of France, all his stamping could not have called forth the race of men whom he had consumed in his gigantic wars. Nothing remained but the military spirit. To blame Napoleon for not making himself, in 1815, "the arm of the democracy," to believe that the deeds of the Convention could be done twice in one generation, was to be blind to facts and to common sense. It has been said, indeed, by Count Thibaudeau, that the most formidable enemy of France and of Napoleon was Napoleon himself. But that expresses only half the truth.

In what condition was France in 1815? For a generation she had been in arms against the world. She had exhausted her vigour in the unrestrained indulgence of her passion for military glory. Her blood was impoverished; her muscles relaxed, her nerves unstrung, her moral force debilitated by twenty-three years of almost uninterrupted warfare. The laurels gathered in a hundred battles were poor compensation for a paralyzed industry and a crippled commerce, for desolate cornfields and half-cultured vineyards. She was *la belle* France no longer. She had used her prime in the debauch of war. Some traces of her strength and beauty still remained, but they only served to remind her of the noble heritage she had bartered for glory. The exultation inspired by Napoleon's return from Elba was but the feverish excitement of a moment, an outburst of expiring military passions, soon to be quenched in blood upon the war-trodden fields of Belgium.

§ 5. *Champ de Mai: Meeting of the Chambers.*

The Emperor had resolved on war, but before he quitted Paris for the army, he played the principal part in two striking political scenes—the famous Champ de Mai and the opening of the Chambers. The Acte Additionnel was submitted to the people, after a fashion which we have seen revived in our own time, and with a similar result—it was accepted. What we may call the solemn inauguration of this political instrument was to be celebrated at the Champ de Mai; when, in the presence of the Imperial Guard, the Line, the National Guard, civil delegates from the departments, and the people of Paris, the acceptance of the Acte Additionnel was to be proclaimed, and the Emperor was to take a solemn oath that he would observe and cause to

be observed the constitutions of the empire; and the troops of all kinds were to swear that they would defend the national flag against the enemies of France. This ceremony did not take place in May, as originally intended, but on the 1st of June. It was a revival of the theatrical shows of the empire. Napoleon, wearing his Imperial robes, appeared on a lofty platform erected in the Champ de Mars, attended by ministers, by prelates, by officers of the army, and surrounded by a mass of soldiers and thousands of people. But although, in his address to them, he appealed to their patriotism, and strove to influence their passions, yet it is admitted that, except in the army, he called forth no abiding enthusiasm for himself, his cause, or his throne, which he said was "the palladium of the independence, honour, and rights of the people." The Champ de Mai was a failure. "Oh, that is what is called a Champ de Mai," it was said; "we have seen nothing *new* in a ceremony announced with so much emphasis; the Revolution has accustomed us to these sights!"

Napoleon had devised this imitation of "an antique usage dear to France," as it was described in Carnot's letter to the Prefects; he submitted, with great reluctance, to the meeting of the Chambers. He had issued the Acte Additionnel as a kind of promissory note, to be honoured if circumstances permitted—("à chaque circonstance sa loi") —when the coming war was over, and had never intended that an assembly should sit during the campaign. But having "begun to reign as a constitutional king," he found that his repugnance to constitutional assemblies must give way, and that he must act his part, if he could, to the end, "Quand la paix sera faite, nous verrons." The peers were nominated by the Emperor from a list prepared by his ministers. Their dignities were to be hereditary, and he

selected those who he judged would most faithfully support his views of government. The deputies were summoned to co-operate with the Emperor in "saving France;" but in the distracted state of the country the Government could exercise little influence over the choice of the electors. On the 3rd of June they met, upwards of six hundred strong, and occupied three days in placing their business machinery in working order, and in choosing a president. They selected M. Lanjuinais, and Napoleon confirmed the selection. Yet he felt that the Chamber had chosen this ancient revolutionist, opposition senator of the Empire, and peer of the Restoration, to mark its distrust of Imperial good faith. On the 7th of June Napoleon opened the session in person and delivered a speech. Declaring that he was commencing his career as a constitutional monarch, he invited the Chambers to consolidate and co-ordinate the scattered constitutions of the Empire, remarking that men are powerless to insure the future, and that institutions alone determine the destinies of nations—a truth it had taken him long to learn. He pointed to the coalition of kings, whose armies were on the frontiers, and exhorted the peers and representatives of France to imitate the Roman Senate, and die rather than survive dishonour. It was a brief but elaborate production. The speaker seemed constrained by his new part. The impassioned and condensed eloquence of the Emperor is nowhere to be found in the utterances of the constitutional sovereign. Three days afterwards the two Chambers had voted addresses to the monarch, and on the 11th they presented them to the Emperor at the Tuileries. There was a marked difference in their substance. That of the Peers professed the strongest attachment to the Emperor, but at the same time did not fail to remind him that he had surrendered absolute power and submitted his Government

to constitutional regulations; nor to intimate, in plain terms, that France fought solely for a peace founded on the recognition of her national independence, and that her institutions were a guarantee to Europe that the French Government "could not be carried away by the seductions of victory." The Representatives, in their address, were not content with a passing allusion to the liberal concessions of the Emperor. They dwelt, with emphasis, on the fact that constitutional liberty was established, as if they doubted the sincerity of him who had laid aside his "extraordinary powers;" and they took care to record their intention of consolidating and amending the constitution. The nation had resumed its rights, and had once more trusted Napoleon, but trusted him only as a constitutional sovereign. In attacking him Europe attacked her, and she would defend her independence; but she cherished no ambitious projects, and even the will of a victorious prince, they said, would be powerless to drag her beyond the limits of her own defence. The Emperor was assured that he should be supported, but he was told significantly that he must seek in victory nothing except a lasting peace. As to the Representatives, while his Majesty was fighting for national independence, they would labour unremittingly to perfect that constitutional pact which would cement the union of the throne and people, and strengthen, in the eyes of Europe, the guarantee of their engagements. Confiding in its tone, this address is substantially one long expression of distrust. The repeated reference to the surrender of absolute power, and the imperfection of the Imperial constitutions; the menacing intimations, disguised in respectful phrases, that the prince would not be allowed to drag the nation into wars of ambition, show that the Chambers reposed only a half-confidence in the Emperor.

The answers of Napoleon were in accordance with the

character of the two addresses. To the peers he said with some sarcasm, that the danger which menaced the country was not the allurements of victory, but "the Caudine Forks;" and he declared that, in the hour of reverses, he should count upon the devotion of the Chamber of Peers. To the Representatives he spoke at greater length. He told them that all his thoughts were absorbed in the war —that very night, indeed, he should set out for the army. They were free to "meditate" upon the Imperial constitutions, and in more tranquil times he would second their efforts by the exercise of his prerogatives. But he warned them that all public discussions tending directly or indirectly to diminish the confidence of the public in the constitution, would be a misfortune for the State; and, enforcing his view by stronger language, he said:—"Don't let us imitate the example of the Lower Empire, which, pressed on all sides by the barbarians, made itself the laughing-stock of posterity by indulging in abstract discussions at the moment when the battering-ram was breaking down the gates of the city." The Representatives must have seen that the tone of their address was appreciated thoroughly by the Emperor; mistrust on both sides was but thinly veiled under the respectful forms and expressions which custom and good sense have decided should be the ordinary medium of communication between a sovereign and his subjects.

That night Napoleon constituted a Council of State to perform the political and administrative functions of Government during his absence, and placed the ex-King Joseph at its head. It consisted of the eight departmental Ministers, and the four Ministers of State, and of Prince Lucien Bonaparte. Early on the morning of the 12th of June Napoleon quitted Paris for the northern frontier, to attack the most advanced and threatening of the Armies of the Coalition.

CHAPTER II.

THE ALLIES IN THE LOW COUNTRIES.

§ 1. *Character and Growth of the Allied Armies.*

WHEN Napoleon broke out of Elba and assumed command once more of the military resources of France, the great Powers had considerable armaments, but in no nation was the army on a war footing. On the frontier of France, between the Meuse and the Moselle, there were in cantonments some 26,000 Prussians under the command of General Kleist, and in Belgium, much scattered, about 40,000 English, Hanoverians, and Dutch-Belgians, under the orders of the Prince of Orange. The King of the Netherlands, to whom Belgium had been allotted in the general distribution of territory at Vienna, had made some efforts to raise, equip, and organize a national army. His earlier attempts had not been attended with much success, but after the abdication of Napoleon and his retirement to Elba in 1814, many Dutch and Belgian officers serving in the Imperial armies returned home, found employment under the King. and greatly improved the quality of his embryo army. Still many of the battalions were raw militia, and the officers were not efficient. Both were more numerous and in somewhat better order in 1815, but still imperfect.

The King of the Netherlands joined promptly the coali-

tion against his imperious neighbour, whose proximity inspired apprehension. His allies were quickly on the alert. The officers of the British Sappers and Miners, who were engaged in restoring the Belgic fortresses, no sooner heard of the escape of Napoleon than they increased their exertions to render the fortresses defensible against a *coup de main*. The measures they adopted were approved; and after the arrival of Wellington at Brussels, and as fast as Sapper companies could be landed at Ostend, and distributed through the country, their labours were directed to the restoration of all the chief posts along the frontier from Ostend to Liége; and at one time not less than 20,000 labourers, men and women, exclusive of strong military fatigue parties, were employed upon the works on the line from Ostend to Mons. Between the 24th of March and the 10th of June, the British Government supplied the Duke, not with what he demanded—"the whole corps of Sappers and Miners,"—but with seven fresh companies, making a total, in the Low Countries, of 782 men; only a little more than one-fourth of the force at the disposal of the Government.[1]

The Duke of Wellington reached Brussels on the 4th of April, and took command of the Dutch-Belgians as well as of the British and Hanoverians. He found that he had at his disposal, for every purpose, exclusive of garrisons, 25,000 Anglo-German troops, of which 5,000 were cavalry, and 20,000 Dutch-Belgians, of which 2,000 were cavalry. The quality of these latter was not good, because the army was raw and young; and the British, said the Duke, were not what they ought to have been to maintain our military character in Europe. The Duke desired 40,000 British infantry and German Legionaries, exclusive of garrison troops; 18,000 cavalry of the same stamp, and 150 British

[1] The strength of the corps in 1815 was 2,861.

field guns; but he does not appear to have been very hopeful of obtaining them. The Government displayed some energy, but not enough. Lord Castlereagh promised the Prussian Minister that, in May, Wellington should have 50,000 *British* troops in the Low Countries; but Lord Bathurst, the War Minister, did not redeem the pledge of the Foreign Secretary to Hardenberg. Wellington sent home blunt remonstrances and plain speaking letters; but the Horse Guards and the War Office were more intent on exercising patronage than on embarking every available man for Belgium. On the 21st of April the Duke was compelled to write the cutting request, that before they sent him any more generals they should let him see more troops. Indeed, the staff grew upon him. He did not know what to do with "the young gentlemen" sent out to act as staff officers. The Ministry at home never consulted the first of British captains on the selection of a staff. "If you will speak to Sir Henry Torrens," the Duke wrote to Major-General Darling, in answer to an application for employment, "he will tell you that I have nothing to say to any appointment to the staff of this army, of any rank. . . . I have no choice, and I beg you to apply in the quarter in which you will certainly succeed without reference to my wishes." Such was the sway of "influence," or of infatuation, that the Horse Guards sent him a Provost-Marshal to the army "utterly unfit for the situation," and when the army moves, he wrote, "I shall be under the necessity of leaving him in the rear, as I did in the Peninsula."

Nevertheless, troops of various kinds trickled into Belgium through Ostend and from Germany. The Anglo-Belgian army had increased by the 3rd of May to 70,000 men fit for service in the field, and the 26,000 Prussians had become 80,000. Blucher had also arrived, and the Duke saw him at Tirlemont on the 2nd of May, and

received from him "most satisfactory assurances of support." On the 21st of May the Duke informed Prince Schwarzenberg that, exclusive of the troops in the garrisons, he could place in the field 60,000 bayonets and nearly 16,000 sabres, and that, of the latter, 10,000 were as good as any in the world. Week by week throughout the month of May the harbour at Ostend was crowded with shipping disembarking troops, stores, and cannon; and many battalions, liberated by the peace with the United States, were crossing the Atlantic, some of them bound for Belgium, and destined not to arrive in time. But the Duke, although he put a good face upon matters to foreigners, did not fail to impress on his own Government the necessity for making every possible exertion. His sentiments in the beginning of May were strongly expressed in an often quoted letter to Lord Stewart. "I have got an infamous army," he wrote, "very weak and ill-equipped, and a very inexperienced staff. In my opinion they are doing nothing in England. They have not raised a man; they have not called out the militia; are unable to send me anything." Indeed, they professed in April to be able to send him only eighty-four field guns, and towards the end of that month the British artillery could only muster for field service forty-two pieces of cannon. But the Horse Guards did not forget to pour a torrent of staff officers into Belgium. "I command a very small British army with a very large British staff, to which my superiors are making additions every day," Wellington wrote on the 22nd of May. Ministers, it is true, had kept part of the militia embodied, which Lord Fitzwilliam and Sir Samuel Romilly strenuously stigmatised as illegal; but at the end of May the bill giving them power to embody the militia had not passed both Houses, so that no additions could have been made to the force, which had not been disem-

bodied at the peace, in time to enable the Government to substitute militia for regulars, and send the latter to the Low Countries. Nevertheless, by the middle of June the total force under the command of the Duke of Wellington, from all sources, had been raised to 105,950 men and 196 guns; and the army under Prince Blucher had, between March and June, grown by degrees, from 26,000 to nearly 120,000 men, with upwards of 300 guns.[1]

The raw material of these two great armies deserves notice. Wellington's force was a heterogeneous mass of British and Continental troops. The nucleus of the army was the purely British batteries, squadrons, and battalions, and the batteries and regiments of the King's German Legion. The greater part of the regiments had served in the Peninsula at some period, but nearly one-half were second battalions, and a large portion recruits who had volunteered from the militia when the line battalions were hurriedly made up for foreign service. There was a good supply of old soldiers, and the young ones, although not well broken in to manœuvring, were stout of heart and strong of limb. Some of the regiments were, indeed, such splendid specimens of British battalions that, in his despatches, Wellington himself, when speaking of them, uses the language of enthusiasm. The cavalry, especially, fills him with admiration. They were well mounted and thoroughly trained; some had "to fight for a name," and some had to fight to keep a name; and all were animated by the true military spirit. The artillery, in like manner, though

[1] The numbers of the Anglo-Allied army are much disputed by historians. But the different estimates put forward by the best authorities arise mainly from different modes of reckoning. After much attention to the subject the writer has arrived at the conclusion that Captain Siborne's figures are as correct as it is possible to make them.

not numerous, was very efficient, both foot and horse; and at the last moment, by substituting 9-pounder for 6-pounder guns in the horse batteries, Colonel Frazer enabled them to cope more effectually with their opponents. The foot-batteries rivalled the infantry in stubbornness, and what sporting men call "staying power;" and the horse batteries shared in the daring and velocity of the cavalry brigades, to which they were attached. The same praise is due to the King's German Legionaries, who from long association and natural aptitude had thoroughly acquired the spirit and method of the British. But the rest of the army, with some striking exceptions, and these mainly the older Hanoverian battalions, were far inferior to the British and the Legionaries. The Dutch-Belgian soldiers, hastily raised and poorly officered, had not reached that degree of discipline which would have made them safe soldiers. The greater part of the foot were militia, and the horse, newly raised like the rest, were inexperienced, and wanting in that confidence in their prowess so necessary to all soldiers who engage the French in fight. The ranks of the whole Dutch-Belgian army contained hosts of officers and soldiers who had served under Napoleon. Many were valiant and patriotic, but the valour and patriotism of the majority was tempered and attenuated by the memory of Napoleon's astounding victories. The Brunswick troops were full of mettle, but young and untried. Their hatred of the French sustained them in the arduous trials to which they were subjected. The Nassauers were also young, and not strong either in body or spirit; but they also were in part old soldiers. This mixed army, so unequal in its elements, brought abruptly together, had not at the opening of the campaign acquired that consistency and mutual confidence so essential to successful operations in war. The soldiers and

officers spoke four or five languages and many dialects. The special merits of the British soldiers were unknown to many of their Continental comrades. Wellington had been a victorious general, but the renown he had derived from his campaigns in the Peninsula was as nothing in their eyes compared with that of Napoleon, or the best of Napoleon's marshals. Yet it may be safely said that Wellington alone held together the incongruous body which had been assembled in the fertile plains of Belgium.

The Prussian army was composed entirely of Prussians —an attempt to make use of 14,000 Saxons failed, for these troops mutinied, and nearly slew Blucher in his head-quarters. One-half of the infantry were regulars, and the other landwehr battalions; but the latter, like the former, had served throughout the war of 1813-14, and in the main they were good soldiers. The cavalry also was composed, in the proportion of three to two, partly of regulars and partly of landwehr.

The best troops were those drawn from the old Prussian provinces on the Elbe and the Oder, and the Baltic. The army was homogeneous, compact, devoted to the fierce captain appointed to guide and lead it, and over-brimming with intense hatred of the French. The slow Germans had been moved to wrath, and their rage was of the Teutonic type—a rage that survives defeat and is not soon satiated by success. The principal officers were skilful in their profession, and shared the passions of the men. Blucher himself was a fair representative of the Prussian nation and army, provoked and stung, by a hundred insults and defeats, to wipe out the former and avenge the latter, or die. At the end of 1806, says a modern French historian, Blucher, then a prisoner of war at Hamburg, displayed an unshakeable faith in the fall of

Napoleon, and predicted the near approach of a time when Europe would rise against him, wearied by his exactions and exasperated by his bad faith. Wellington had held firmly to the same belief; and their faith was greater in 1815 than it was at an earlier stage, for in 1814 they had seen their confidence justified.

§ 2. *Disposition and Function of the Anglo-Prussian Armies.*

The allied armies formed the right of the vast body of men with which the Vienna coalition designed to overthrow finally the power of Bonaparte and the French army. Hence the measures of Blucher and Wellington were dependent upon and in harmony with those of their allies, who were more backward in their preparations than Prussia and Great Britain. For the Austrians and Russians, the Swiss and Sardinians, not to speak of the Spaniards, the Swedes, and the Danes, were still, in May, 1815, far from being ready for an invasion of France, the great object of every Power in Europe. Their troops were in motion on all the roads leading to the French frontier, from the North Sea to the Mediterranean, from the Vistula to the Rhine, from the Sound to the barrier fortresses of French Flanders. But though the Sardinians were gathering in the Apennines and the Swiss in the Alps, though the Austrians and Bavarians were collecting on the Rhine, though the Russians were moving down in great columns from Poland, the Prussians and the Anglo-Belgians alone had mustered in strength close to the frontier. Their object was twofold. It was their duty to be prepared for an attack, should Napoleon think it expedient to strike the first blow, and at the same time to be ready to cross the frontier at the first signal from

the chiefs of the coalition. The disposition of their forces was, therefore, governed by these considerations.

As early as the 11th of April, Wellington had divided his troops into two corps d'armée and a reserve, the former commanded respectively by the Prince of Orange and Lord Hill, the last by himself. The first corps included the divisions of Cooke and Alten, and the greater part of the Dutch-Belgians, under Chassé, Perponcher, and Collaert. The second corps consisted of Colville's and Clinton's divisions, and a division and a half of Dutch-Belgians, under Prince Frederic of Orange. The reserve was composed of Picton's and Cole's divisions, the Nassauers, and Brunswickers. The guns were partially distributed through the divisions. The whole of the cavalry was under the orders of the Earl of Uxbridge, and the British portion was kept united in cantonments. Three excellent British foot regiments were detached to form the nucleus of the maritime fortress garrisons. With this force Wellington barred the road to Brussels and Antwerp, and covered his line of communications with England.

Hence he occupied an immense front. Commencing from the right, at Ostend, the line followed the frontier. Nieuport, Ypres, Courtrai, Tournai, Mons, had been strengthened so far as to be able to embarrass the march of an army attempting to break into Belgium between the Scheldt and the Lys, or between the Scheldt and the Sambre, and also to cover the movement of troops within this line of posts. Wherever it was practicable, the sluices were opened, and the country was inundated. It was behind these fortified towns, and between them and Antwerp and Ghent, that the Anglo-Belgian army was posted. From Courtrai to Mons ran a chain of cavalry outposts in observation, and in rear of these stood the divisions of the army. The great mass of the troops were cantoned in the wide plains between the

Scheldt and the great road from Charleroi through Brussels to Antwerp. Lord Hill's head-quarters were at Ath, on the Dender, and the brigades of his corps extended to the right as far as the Lys, and to the left in the direction of Mons. The first corps formed the left of the army, the head-quarters were at Braine le Comte, and the divisions were on each side of the highway from Mons to Brussels. The most forward post on this side was at Binche, and the farthest to the left was at Frasne. In the rear of Hill lay the great body of the cavalry, cantoned in the valley of the Dender, the head-quarters being at Grammont; and in rear of the Prince of Orange was the reserve, in and about Brussels, with one brigade of Cole's division at Ghent. Thus there were nearly 30,000 men on the right, that is, between the Dender and the Scheldt, nearly as many on the left, between the Dender and the Brussels and Charleroi road; about 8,000 horsemen in and about Grammont and Ninhove, a central position, and the 25,000 men of the reserve near Brussels. Hence two-thirds of the army were really east of the Dender, upon the great roads leading from Valenciennes and Maubeuge upon Brussels, and on the flank of the road through Charleroi to the Belgian capital.

Wellington has been censured severely by British and Continental writers for this widely-spread disposition of his army. It has been declared to be incontestable that the troops were *trop à droite*. This is one of those nice points which it is almost profitless to discuss. The French, accustomed to live upon requisitions, do not give weight to Wellington's answer, that one reason for the wide distribution of his troops was, that the feeding of the army was facilitated thereby. Colonel Charras makes light of this,[1]

[1] General Sir James Shaw Kennedy, in his admirable little book, published in 1865, agrees with Charras, and puts his statement of the

points to the vast resources at Wellington's disposal, and the great natural wealth of the Low Countries. But this able writer forgets that there were Prussians as well as British to be fed, that the former were living at free quarters, and that there were nearly 30,000 cavalry between Liége and Ghent. Every critic, without exception, appears to be more or less influenced by the fact that Napoleon attacked at the point where the flanks of the two armies lapped over each other, and necessarily the point involving the longest marches for the outlying divisions. Perhaps this is inevitable, but considering that the two armies were awaiting the assembly of other and distant forces, with a view to extensive operations; that in the meantime they had to secure their communication—one with Ostend, Antwerp, and England, the other with the Rhine and Germany; that they had to draw subsistence from the Low Countries, and desired to draw it with the least inconvenience to a friendly nation; and, above all, considering that the adversary, whom they had to guard against, was Napoleon Bonaparte, who had the initiative, one might have expected a somewhat less partial survey than we find in some quarters. If it is incontestable that the British army was too much to the right, it is also incontestable that Napoleon might have attacked on that side, or have adopted any other course than

case in these sweeping terms: "The totally inadequate reason for not concentrating the Armies [Prussian as well as English] was a mere alleged inconvenience as to supplies; in other words two Armies, fully prepared with all their means of taking the field, in the richest country in Europe, and with their communications both by sea and land completely open, were, for this mere supposed inconvenience, to risk being destroyed in detail by an inferior army. If the Allied armies had been in this helpless state as to their means of subsistence, they would have been totally unequal to manœuvre as an army in junction in the face of the enemy." This is a controversy which will go on until Waterloo is forgotten.

the course he did adopt. What he would do no man could have foreseen. "His numbers, his movements, his designs were concealed, protected, and supported by his formidable fortresses on the frontier up to the last moment previous to their being put in execution." "The initiative rested with the enemy, and the course to be pursued by the allied generals respectively was to be prepared to move in all directions, to wait until it should be seen in what direction the attack would be made, and then to assemble the armies as quickly as possible to resist the attack, or to attack the enemy with the largest force that could be collected." Such are Wellington's own words.[1]

It is admitted that the sure eye of Napoleon detected the weakest point in the defensive dispositions of the Allies. It is manifest that he fell upon it with great velocity. What might have occurred had he swooped or manœuvred upon some other point, no one can say. What did occur when he assailed the Allies at their point of junction has resounded through the world for half a century, and formed the basis of one of the longest periods of European peace on record. And yet, because men, bewildered by his glory, have assumed that Napoleon could accomplish any design, however vast, which it pleased him to plan, we are asked to believe, not that Napoleon framed and attempted to execute too vast a project, but that Wellington and Blucher blundered into victory on the fields of Quatre Bras and Waterloo. If circumstances, if the large and complicated interests at stake—the fate of kings, armies, and nations—compelled Wellington and Blucher to make a radically defective disposition of their forces, how much greater is their glory, since, in spite of all these disadvantages, they were able to fight four battles within three days, and utterly circumvent and rout the superb army of their formidable foe!

[1] Memorandum on the work of General Clausewitz.

The fact is that Wellington and Blucher were never for a moment off their guard. Their arrangements for moving in any direction were ample and complete; their eyes were ever turned towards the frontier, and their ears were open to catch the slightest sign of Napoleon's movements and intentions. Wellington felt no alarm, because he was well prepared. He had deeply reflected upon the task before him, and had coolly taken a wide and profound survey of his own duties. He was in constant communication not only with Blucher, but with Schwarzenberg, Wrede, and Alexander; and, while he provided for the defence of Belgium, he also looked forward to the invasion of France. He did not anticipate an irruption of the French between the Sambre and Meuse, because, in his judgment, that was not a good line of operations. Surely we are entitled to say that the result made good his judgment. No doubt it may be said that had Napoleon's plans been executed as he designed them, the Allies would have been cut in two and defeated. But, in answer to that, it may be said that if the movements ordered by the allied generals had been executed, then even Napoleon's grand scheme would still have failed. But the fact is, that this project of Napoleon's has been exaggerated; for it was formed on the assumption, and it was only practicable on the assumption, that the Allies would concentrate to the right and left of the road from Charleroi to Brussels, and offer themselves in detail to his conquering sword. They did neither the one nor the other. There were mischances on both sides, but the greater blunders and misconceptions were on the side of Napoleon. Thus much by way of commentary on unjust criticisms founded mainly on those perversions of history concocted at St. Helena.

If the British general had posted his forces *trop à droite*, on the same principle the Prussian general had posted his

army *trop à gauche;* for the point of concentration of the most distant corps was Liége, on the Meuse, upwards of fifty miles, as the crow flies, from Fleurus. The Prussian army was divided into four corps, each a complete army in itself, being composed of four brigades of infantry, with a due proportion of cavalry and artillery. The 1st, commanded by General von Ziethen, stood on the right; the 2nd, under General Pirch, in the right centre; the 3rd, under General von Thielemann, on the left centre, thrown forward over the Meuse; and the 4th, under Count Bülow, on the left. The point of concentration for the 4th corps was Liége, and the brigades of the corps were posted chiefly on the north and west of head-quarters. The 3rd corps occupied the country between the Meuse and the Ourte, having its head-quarters at Ciney, midway between the two rivers, and one brigade at Huy, on the Meuse. The outposts were extended southward towards the frontier as far as Rochefort and Dinant. The 2nd corps had its head-quarters at Namur; its brigades occupied the road from that place towards Louvain, but one brigade was at Huy. The outposts were on the left bank of the Meuse, the most advanced being at Sossoye, communicating on its left with Thielemann, and on its right with Ziethen. The 1st corps occupied the line of the Sambre from Thuin on the right bank to Moustier sur Sambre on the left. The head-quarters were at Charleroi. One brigade was in and around Fontaine l'Evêque, a second at Marchienne au Pont, a third at Fleurus, and the fourth in Moustier sur Sambre. The cavalry and reserve artillery were in Sombref and Gembloux. The outposts followed the Sambre from Lobbes and Thuin to Charleroi, and thence extended through Gerpinnes across the angle formed by the Sambre and Meuse towards Sossoye. Thus the Prussian right overlapped the British left, for Ziethen's detachments were posted close to Binche

in communication with the Dutch-Belgian divisions cantoned on the Haine. Ziethen occupied, therefore, both sides of the road from Charleroi to Brussels, covering the British posts at Frasne, Quatre Bras, and Genappe on that road. Blucher had his head-quarters at Liége, and it is admitted that, orders being promptly obeyed, the whole Prussian army might have been collected in twenty-four hours, either at Ciney, Fleurus, Namur, or Liége. Wellington himself admits that he could not have assembled his army so quickly, but he contends that the objects he had in view, the nature of the country he had to protect, "contiguous in its whole extent to the French frontier, and traversed in all parts by excellent paved roads leading from some one or other of the French fortresses, required a system of occupation quite different from that adopted" by the Prussian generals.

Every one can judge for himself the force of the Duke's remark. The Prussians, in truth, were less exposed than the British, and their communications were less easily assailed. They were supported on both flanks—by the British on their right, and by the allied armies assembling on their left; while the British force formed the extreme right flank of the great armies of the coalition, and might have been assailed at various points by the whole weight of the French army. Except in so far as they serve to exercise the ingenuity of the critic these discussions are sterile. The Allies in Belgium were not cantoned by chance: it was their duty to preserve intact certain great political and military interests, and they were posted systematically that they might cope with any contingency. The arrangements adopted were so good that they were able to meet and frustrate an enemy, free to choose his own time and mode of attack. They, therefore, answered their purpose.

§ 3. *Preparations and Projects.*

Practically, from the very first moment the Allies were obliged to be on their guard. Wellington was no sooner established in Belgium than he took measures to induce the Prussian general to draw towards Brussels and take up quarters between Charleroi and Huy, in order that, if need were, the two armies should be in a position to assemble "in front" of the capital of Belgium. The Prince of Orange and General Kleist had talked of concentrating at Tirlemont; but Wellington, from the very first, insisted that Brussels ought not to be abandoned. The Allied Armies in the Low Countries, he said, covered the assembly of the troops of the Allied Powers. The former were bound, at this stage, to act on the defensive, because they had to wait for a plan of operations and a signal to attack from the sovereigns at Vienna. Although at that early period there were French forces of unknown magnitude assembled behind the screen of French fortresses, Wellington felt the utmost confidence in his ability to defeat them should they avail themselves of the initiative and attack. To facilitate communication with the Prussians, and promote his views, he sent Sir Henry Hardinge to their head-quarters. While adopting a defensive system Wellington did not overlook the chances of immediate offensive warfare. He calculated that the Allies could enter France on the 1st of May with 270,000 men: his own troops, the Prussians, and the Austro-Bavarians; and he estimated that at this period Napoleon would not have more than 180,000 disposable for service in the field. His reason for suggesting instant war was that by adopting this course the Allies would anticipate "the plans and measures of Buonaparte." "His power now rests," he contended, "upon no foundation but the army,"

a statement often disputed then and since, but one which events proved to be sagacious and well founded. But Napoleon's energy rendered the plan of Wellington abortive. His despotic action worked more swiftly and decisively than the vast unwieldy machine opposed to him; and Wellington found reason, two days after he devised his scheme of invasion, to reverse his opinion, and declare that circumstances no longer rendered it advisable to attempt its execution. The circumstances referred to were the capitulation of the Duke of Angoulême, the organization of the grenadier battalions of the National Guard, and the call for soldiers recently discharged, 100,000 of whom, Wellington calculated, would join the French army. These measures brought the forces of the Allies and Napoleon too nearly on a numerical equality to make invasion prudent. Wellington had a wise respect for the abilities of Napoleon, and the habit of not underrating his adversary proved as useful to him as the contrary habit proved injurious to Napoleon.

The 1st of May arrived and with it false reports of the march of the Imperial Guard, and of the intention of Bonaparte to visit the frontier. Yet uncertain of their value, Wellington issued the first orders directing a concentration of the cantonments of the troops. Informing the Earl of Uxbridge of this order, he said that "all dispositions were so made that the whole army could be collected in one short movement, with the Prussians on his left." The line of operations which he deemed it probable that the French would select was either between the Lys and Scheldt, or between the Scheldt and Sambre, or by both, and for each contingency he was prepared. This order alone shows that Wellington was never for one moment in a position where he could be surprised, providing he obtained from the outposts prompt informa-

tion of the enemy's movements. He had personally inspected the whole line of defence from Ostend to Mons, and his military study of Belgium in 1814 had made him familiar not only with its strong, but its weak places. He was therefore "ready to move in every direction," and his ally, Blucher, had taken the same precaution, on his side. The very situation in which they were placed rendered caution, vigilance, and good arrangements necessary; for, up to the moment when Napoleon attacked, the Allies were compelled to remain on the defensive, close to a frontier over which their patrols could not pass, behind which an enemy might suddenly collect at any point, from which he might strike an equally sudden blow. They were, on the 14th of June, performing the duty described by Wellington on the 5th of April—covering the assembly of armies on the Rhine, protecting large political interests in Belgium, maintaining and securing their communications with England and Germany, and waiting for the signal from Vienna to break through the barrier into France. Generals in such a situation would be madmen if they slumbered at their posts; and assuredly neither Wellington nor Blucher shut their eyes or ears. Both obtained tolerably accurate intelligence, but manifestly not so precise as that which could have been gathered up had their patrols hovered close upon the enemy's cantonments. "In the situation," wrote Wellington to the Prince of Orange, on the 11th of May, "in which we are placed at present, neither at peace nor at war, unable on that account to patrol up to the enemy and ascertain his position by view, or to act offensively upon any part of his line, it is difficult, if not impossible, to combine an operation, because there are no data on which to found any combination. All we can do is put our troops in such a situation as, in case of sudden attack by the enemy, to render it easy to assemble,

and provide against the chance of being cut off from the rest." This passage fully explains the sound principle on which he acted, and shows at the same time how much he relied on his own genius, and on the talents of his lieutenants. Full of confidence, he urged offensive operations as speedily as possible. There was not a moment to lose. "I say nothing about our defensive operations," he writes on the 8th of May, "because I am inclined to believe that Blucher and I are so well united and so strong, that the enemy cannot do us much mischief. I am at the advanced post of the whole; the greatest part of the enemy's force is in my front; and if I am satisfied, others need be under no apprehensions." A rumour that Napoleon had left Paris brought the Prussian head-quarters to Hannut, and soon afterwards they were carried to Namur. Wellington obtained a pretty good account of the general state, strength, and disposition of the disposable force in France, and forwarded his information to the commanders of the allied armies on the Rhine, as well as to Blucher. He heard that Soult and Mortier were employed, and that measures had been taken to move the Guard from Paris to Maubeuge in forty-eight hours. These statements, so nearly true, were not of a nature to lull an officer like Wellington, and they did not. He was incessantly active, and ever prepared.

The Allies occupied a front almost co-extensive with the frontier of France. Wellington and Blucher commanded the forces nearest to Paris; the other armies were more distant; the whole being in echelon, from the Scheldt to the Swiss frontier. The plan of campaign suggested by Wellington, and approved, was this:—The left was to move first, because it was the most distant from Paris, and opposed by the smallest force, and because the fortresses interposed serious obstacles to a movement on the right. When the left had reached Langres, the centre would cross

the Meuse, occupy Sedan, and watch Metz and Thionville; then the right would enter France, and get possession of Givet and Maubeuge. Three grand masses, 150,000 strong, would thus successively invade France, and, connecting their operations, press forward towards Paris, supported by the reserves, principally composed of Russians. On this plan it is needless to dwell, since its execution was anticipated by Napoleon.

CHAPTER III.

GENERAL POSITION ON THE EVE OF THE CAMPAIGN.

WE have seen that Napoleon, by the beginning of June, had raised the effective force of the French regular army to 276,982 men, of whom 198,130 were disposable for war. But, threatened on all sides by implacable enemies, he could not bring all his cannon, bayonets, and sabres to bear upon one point. The largest mass of his adversaries had gathered close on his northern frontier, and therefore he kept four corps and a mass of cavalry between the Meuse and the Lys, one on the Moselle, and the Imperial Guard at Paris. These, combined, were destined to form the fighting, or, in the inflated language of the Empire, the Grande Armée. The larger part of the remainder of the disposable effective of the troops of the line, some 52,000 men, together with 38,000 National Guards d'élite, were divided into six small bodies, whereof two were styled corps d'armée, the 5th and 7th, and four were called corps of observation. They were scattered between Strasbourg and Antibes, thus:—

The 5th corps, 19,000 troops of the line, and 3,000 National Guards, under Count Rapp, held the famous lines of the Lauter, between Hagenau and Landau, having its head-quarters in Strasbourg. Napoleon had promised

Rapp 40,000 troops of the line when he sent him to command on the Upper Rhine. At the opening of the campaign he had not half that number under arms—a feeble force wherewith to face the masses collecting in Baden and Wurtemburg and in the provinces on the left bank of the great German river. On the right of Rapp, but at a considerable distance, General Le Courbe, with a force of 4,446 regulars and 10,000 National Guards, watched Basle and the passes of the Jura range; while a weak division of National Guards hardly kept up the communication with Rapp. On the right of Le Courbe, Marshal Suchet, with the 7th corps, a mixed force like the others, 8,814 of the line and 12,000 National Guards, held Chambery and Grenoble. His corps was styled the Army of the Alps, and its contingent of National Guards was half armed, barely equipped, and poorly clad. A much weaker body, 4,081 men, under Marshal Brune, was scattered between Toulon and the Var. On the Spanish frontier, Decaen was at Toulouse, in front of the Eastern, and Clauzel at Bordeaux, watching the Western Pyrenees; the aggregate of their troops, National Guards included, did not exceed 14,000 men. The forces available for the defence of Napoleon from his external enemies was further diminished by 8,500 troops of the Line and 6,000 National Guards, who, under General Lamarque, contended with enemies within; for the royalists were up in the West, and they occupied the attention of Lamarque until the end of June in the old battle-ground of La Vendée. Behind all these troops were the depôts, but almost drained of men; and in the fortresses were distributed some 150,000 National Guards, sailors, and local troops.

Thus the forces in the hands of Napoleon were 276,982 regulars and about 200,000 other troops, for the most part inferior; giving a total of 476,982 men.

The energy and resolution of the Allies are conspicuously shown in the general enumeration of the immense forces they had directed upon France. Austria, beside the Army engaged in the overthrow of Murat in Italy, had collected nearly 100,000 men on the Rhine between Manheim and Basle. About 80,000 Bavarians, Wurtemburgers, Hessians, and Badeners, under Prince Wrede, were in the Palatinate and on the Upper Rhine. Some 26,000 men, under General Kleist, were in Luxembourg and Rhenish Prussia. Throughout the months of April and May three strong Russian columns were marching across Germany from Poland, Silesia, and Bohemia, upon Mayence, Oppenheim, and Manheim; and their leading divisions arrived in time to take part in the opening movements of the campaign upon the Rhine. In addition to these forces an Austro-Sardinian army was collected for the invasion of the south-eastern departments. It was arranged that the forces on both banks of the Rhine should simultaneously invade France from Mayence to Basle, supported by the Russians, and directing their steps towards Chalons sur Marne, St. Diziers, and Rheims, while the corps of Kleist advanced, and watched, and controlled the garrisons on the Meuse between Meziers and Verdun. At the same time the Austro-Sardinian army was to cross the Alps and march on Lyons. The forces on the right flank—Blucher's and Wellington's—were to regulate their progress by that of the centre and left. The object of the whole, upwards of 700,000 strong, was Paris. But Napoleon would not wait to be attacked, and hence the brunt as well as the glory of the short war fell upon the British and Prussian armies.

It has been seen that the first thought of Napoleon when he found himself once more in the Tuileries was of war. An instinct told him that he would attract towards himself the whole force of Europe. How could he best

meet it? He has stated that, on the 2nd of April, when Wellington was hastening from Vienna to the Low Countries, he might have occupied Brussels. No doubt such an exploit was possible, but a little reflection showed him that it would not be wise. For he admits that to achieve possession of the capital of Belgium he must have taken the regular troops out of the garrisons, and have confided the care of the strong places to the local National Guards. It was precisely these local troops whom he could not trust, for there were numerous partisans of the Bourbons in Picardy and Flanders. Moreover, Napoleon had loudly declared that peace with the world was his most ardent desire, and at the moment no doubt it was. France, too, desired peace, and thus the Emperor dared not invade Belgium in April; first, because he had not the means; next, because he would have too roughly, and abruptly, and flagrantly, set at nought the professions he deemed it expedient to parade before a wearied nation when he reascended the throne. Nor was this all; he thought that, by delaying hostilities, he might break up the coalition; and, by assuming the airs of an injured man, and presenting himself in the character of vindicator of national independence, he hoped, at least, to furnish arguments to his friends in the British Parliament. By his intrigues he aspired to shake the resolution of Austria and to detach Russia; by his hypocritical moderation he hoped to embarrass the British Government, perhaps help to bring their opponents into office. Then delay would afford him invaluable time to make those preparations which we have already described.

Hence he deferred hostilities. But his illusions were soon dispelled. The conduct of the Allies, and the vast scale of their counter-preparations compelled him to admit that his open appeals and secret intrigues had failed. On

the other side of the frontier the armed hosts were increasing as fast as the men could march. In a few weeks the signal would be given, and these hosts, overstepping the frontiers, would converge in dense columns upon Paris. It was plain to him that he was isolated in Europe, with nothing to depend on but himself and his army.

Then came the questions, should he act on the defensive, abandoning Flanders, Picardy, Artois, Alsace, Lorraine, Champagne, Burgundy, and Dauphiny, and basing himself upon Paris and Lyons, (which by the end of July he thought would be completely fortified,) wage a vigorous and defensive war; or should he forestall the Allies by striking at Wellington and Blucher before the Austrians and Russians were ready to march? Napoleon himself has set forth, with great minuteness, the advantages of the first course. He estimates that the Allies could not have appeared before Paris and Lyons until the middle of August; that by this time their force would have been reduced to 450,000 men on the Seine and 100,000 before Lyons; that his own troops of every description would have increased, and would continue to increase every day; and that independently of the garrison of the intrenched camp of Paris (116,000 men), he would have had 240,000 choice troops, wherewith to manœuvre on both banks of the Seine and the Marne. Napoleon dared not adopt this plan, which seemed to present so many chances of ultimate success. Had he at that moment commanded the unhesitating devotion of France, as he commanded the absolute devotion of the army, it might have been practicable. But the popular feeling would have been turned against him, and even his immense influence over the army would have been weakened, had he abandoned the frontier departments. His relations with Europe were under political interdict; his relations with the constitutional and repub-

lican factions were so strained that he was compelled to escape from them by having recourse to action.

Hence he determined to wind up his political affairs in Paris, and adopting the second plan, to fall upon the nearest corps of the Allies. This he held to be more conformable to the genius of the nation, and the spirit and principle of the war; for France is neither like Russia nor Spain. On the supposition that the Allies could not begin hostilities until the 15th of July, he determined to begin on the 15th of June. He hoped to collect 140,000 men in Flanders; to defeat the Anglo-Belgic and Prussian armies; raise the Belgian people and recruit the French from the Belgian army; and then, reinforced by the 5th corps (Rapp's) and by supplies of men from the depôts, to meet the Austrians and Russians and fight them in Dumouriez's old battle-field, Champagne. He regarded it as a probable result, that the defeat of Wellington would entail the fall of the British Government, which would be replaced, he thought, by the friends of peace; if so, this single event, he said, would terminate the war. It will be seen how full of errors were the premises on which Napoleon built up this prospect of success. He had friends in Belgium, but not more than Louis XVIII. had in French Flanders, nay, in Paris, and very few of the Bonapartists were in the Belgian Army; while it is now abundantly clear that the British nation was never, during the whole course of the struggle, so unanimously and so heartily in favour of prosecuting the war against Napoleon. The picture which the Emperor has drawn of himself as the Liberator of Nations stands out in rude contrast to the fact that the nations were sending every adult male they could spare to strike down and secure the self-styled liberator himself.

Napoleon, determined to begin the war without delay, had next to choose his line of operations. He knew from

his spies how widely the Allies were spread over the Low Countries. He was aware that the two armies had two distinct and divergent bases, and were commanded by two generals differing materially in character. His only chance of success lay in swift marches and crushing victories. To win these victories he must defeat his foes in detail, and though his aggregate force was weaker than their aggregate force, yet he must contrive to be always the stronger at the point of contact. Therefore, he argued, that he must neither attack between the Moselle and the Meuse, because that course would allow Wellington to join Blucher without molestation; nor must he attack between the Sambre and Scheldt, because in that case Blucher would be able to effect a junction with Wellington. Nor, and for similar reasons, did he deem it prudent to descend the Meuse and attack Namur. The fact that the Allies would require the longest time to concentrate on their inner flanks did not escape him. He, therefore, determined to attack between the Sambre and Meuse. He calculated that if he struck at the centre of the two armies he should be able to wedge himself in between them, crushing any divisions which attempted to obstruct his progress, and having won a position of vantage he imagined that it would be in his power to manœuvre with rapidity from side to side, and defeat each army in succession. With unbounded confidence, nourished by the recollection of 1814, he determined to fling himself into the midst of his foes, and by risking, with consummate daring if not consummate skill, the highest stake he had upon the first throw, he hoped to win the favour of fortune and lessen the chances against ultimate success by disabling his two most redoubtable adversaries. It was in this frame of mind that he resolved on immediate war, and devised the brilliant scheme whereby he intended to bring victory back to the eagles.

CHAPTER IV.

THE INVASION OF BELGIUM.

§ 1. *Concentration of the French Army.*

NAPOLEON'S first operation was a masterpiece. He rapidly concentrated, between the Sambre and the Meuse, nearly 130,000 men, consisting of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 6th corps d'armée, commanded respectively by D'Erlon, Reille, Vandamme, Gérard, and Lobau, of the Imperial Guard, and of four corps of reserve cavalry.

At the beginning of June the corps of D'Erlon, Reille, and Vandamme were in cantonments on the northern frontier between Lille near the Scheldt and Mézières on the Meuse, the connecting links being Rocroi, Avesnes, Maubeuge, and Valenciennes. Every road on the frontier was strictly and closely guarded, and every precaution was taken to prevent Wellington and Blucher from obtaining correct information. Yet early in June both were pretty well aware what posts were occupied by each corps, by whom they were commanded, and their probable strength. In rear of these three corps stood Lobau at Laon, where Soult, temporarily in command of the whole, had his head-quarters. The four corps of cavalry, commanded by Pajol, Excelmans, Kellerman, and Milhaud, about to be placed under the orders of Marshal Grouchy, were cantoned between Laon and Avesnes. The artillery park was

at La Fére on the river Serre. In rear of all was the Imperial Guard united at Compiègne. We have accounted for the whole force except that of Gérard. The corps he commanded was styled the Army of the Moselle, and was cantoned on that river between Metz and Thionville. It thus pointed to the Rhine rather than the Sambre, but when Napoleon resolved to break in upon the centre of the Allies, he called Gérard from the Moselle to the Army of the North. The concentration of these forces is one of the most remarkable features of the campaign.

Napoleon intended to surprise the Allies. To effect this it was necessary that he should appear among them suddenly; should divert attention from his real object, and deceive them, if possible. Therefore the garrisons along the whole line, from the Moselle to the North Sea, were instructed to mask the march of the several corps, while on the frontier, between Dunquerque and Maubeuge, it was arranged that at the moment when the troops in cantonments marched for the point of concentration the advanced posts should be tripled, "so that the enemy, deceived as to the real object, might believe that the whole army was about to be united towards its left." This fact did not pass unobserved by the British cavalry outposts, but it did not afford a sufficient indication of the enemy's intentions, and although it may have made him cautious, it did not cause Wellington to move a single battalion.

Gérard, who had the longest march before him, was first put in motion. He quitted Metz as early as the 6th of June, regulating his progress so as to arrive at Philippeville on the 13th. Two days later, on the 8th, the Imperial Guard quitted Compiègne, heading for Beaumont. In succession, Vandamme moved to his left, and Reille and D'Erlon to their right, and the cavalry gradually closed

upon the front, inclining to their right. Thus for seven days streams of troops of all arms flowed into the country between the Sambre and the Meuse; as he had ordered, so his orders were executed by eager soldiers and excellent generals; and Napoleon had the satisfaction of finding his whole active army concentrated on the morning of the 14th. The Guard coming from Compiègne, the army of the Moselle from Metz, had arrived at the same moment as the cavalry from Laon and Avesnes, and the infantry from Rocroi and Valenciennes. It is a splendid proof of the genius of the commander, the abilities of the executive officers, and the discipline of the troops.

We have seen Napoleon quit Paris at daybreak on the 12th. Ere nightfall he arrived at Laon. There he slept, relieved Soult of his command, appointed him to be Major-General of the Army, that is, Chief of the Staff; and, setting forth in the morning, Napoleon went on to Avesnes. The same evening he issued the final directions to the troops, and disposed them in order for striking the long-meditated blow. It was his object to place them as close as possible to the frontier, but not actually upon it; and his array, therefore, in great measure conformed to the frontier—not the frontier as it now exists, but as it was settled in 1814. The first and second corps were on the extreme left, Reille at Leers, and D'Erlon behind him at Solre sur Sambre. Both corps were to march at three o'clock on the morning of the 15th, the first following the second, so that they might manœuvre in the same direction, and protect each other. The third corps (Vandamme's), and the sixth corps (Lobau's), were posted three miles in front of Beaumont; two miles in rear were the infantry of the Imperial Guard, one regiment excepted, which was in the town, while the cavalry of the Guard were in the rear of Beaumont. Next, towards the right, the four

corps of reserve cavalry were placed on the right front of Beaumont, and between that place and Walcourt; and on its right Gerard's corps, late the Army of the Moselle, took its station in front of Philippeville. All were ordered to march on the morning of the 15th—the greater part at three o'clock, but the guard and 6th corps a little later. Thus this vast force presented a concave front, the left being thrown forward to the point where the frontier line crosses the Sambre. The great mass of the Imperial army was gathered to a head at Beaumont, and pointed directly upon Charleroi. Grouchy's cavalry connected the massive centre with the lighter right wing at Philippeville. All the generals were ordered to keep secret the directions of their commander, to prevent any one from passing the frontier, and to conceal the fires of the bivouacs from the enemy. This last direction was obeyed, but it failed in its object. The fires were lighted in the ravines and interior slopes of the hills, but the quick eye of General Ziethen, on the watch night and day, detected the presence of the French army by the *reflection* of their concealed fires in the evening sky—a warning by which he did not neglect to profit. The army thus concentrated consisted of twenty divisions of infantry, fourteen divisions of cavalry, thirty-one batteries of foot and sixteen of horse artillery, making a total of 128,088 men, that is 89,415 infantry, 22,302 cavalry, and 15,871 artillery, with 344 guns.[1] Perhaps the finest and most complete army ever commanded by Napoleon; an army which believed in him and in victory with a force and devotion never surpassed. To this army, on the 14th, Napoleon issued the following address:—

[1] Charras.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

NAPOLEON, by the Grace of God and the constitutions of the Empire, Emperor of the French, etc., to the Grand Army.

At the Imperial Head Quarters,
Avesnes, June 14, 1815.

Soldiers! this day is the anniversary of Marengo and of Friedland, which twice decided the destiny of Europe. Then, as after Austerlitz, as after Wagram, we were too generous! We believed in the protestations and in the oaths of princes, whom we left on their thrones. Now, however, leagued together, they assail the independence and the most sacred rights of France. They have commenced the most unjust of aggressions. Let us, then, march to meet them: are they and we no longer the same men?

Soldiers! at Jena against these same Prussians, now so arrogant, you were one to three, and at Montmirail one to six.

Let those among you who have been captives among the English describe the nature of their prison-ships, and the frightful miseries they endured.

The Saxons, the Belgians, the Hanoverians, the Soldiers of the Confederation of the Rhine, lament that they are compelled to use their arms in the cause of princes, the enemies of justice and of the rights of all nations. They know that this coalition is insatiable! After having devoured twelve millions of Poles, twelve millions of Italians, one million of Saxons, and six millions of Belgians, it now wishes to devour the states of the second rank in Germany.

Madmen! one moment of prosperity has bewildered them. The oppression and humiliation of the French people are beyond their power. If they enter France they will find their graves.

Soldiers! we have forced marches to make, battles to fight, dangers to encounter; but with firmness victory will be ours. The rights, the honour, and the happiness of the country will be regained.

To every Frenchman who has courage, the moment has now arrived to conquer or to die!

NAPOLEON.

The Marshal Duke of Dalmatia, Major-General.

In his portfolio he had a proclamation dated by anticipation from "the Imperial palace of Laeken," and

addressed "to the Belgians and inhabitants of the left bank of the Rhine." In this production, destined never to be issued, he said:—"The ephemeral success of my enemies has detached you, for a moment, from my empire. In exile, on a rock in the midst of the seas, I have heard your complaints. The God of battles has decided the destiny of your beautiful provinces—Napoleon is among you! You are worthy to be Frenchmen. Rise, rejoin my invincible phalanxes to exterminate your enemies and mine. They fly with rage and despair in their hearts." Such was the anticipation; let us look on the reality.

§ 2. *The Allies on the Alert.*

Napoleon had assembled his army rapidly and secretly, but although the Prussian outposts did not hear the cries of delight which greeted this famous Order of the Day, they saw, as we have said, the reflected light of the long line of bivouac fires, and they soon found, from observation on the 14th, that a considerable force was behind the thick screen of countervailing outposts. Wellington was at Brussels, and Blucher at Namur. The French advance touched the Prussians, and not the British, and to this we must attribute the fact that Blucher had earlier and more complete information than the British commander. Ziethen was so well prepared for all possible contingencies that on the 14th he had scarcely any change to make in the disposition of his brigades. He had included in his estimate of contingencies the very attack Napoleon was about to make, and he had prescribed to each brigade the course it should adopt. All he had to do, therefore, was to apprise Blucher of the reasons that led him to believe the French were in force close to the frontier on the right bank of the Sambre, and about Beaumont, and of the arrival of Napo-

leon at Avesnes. This he did early on the 14th, and at a later period he forwarded information that confirmed his views. Wellington also learned, probably from the Prussians, that the French troops on the frontier had been increased, and that Napoleon was with them; but while Blucher on the night of the 14th directed Bulow to march upon Hannut,—Pirch I. to occupy Sombref, Thielemann to concentrate upon Namur, and Ziethen to retreat, if attacked, slowly, and fighting every inch of the way, upon Fleurus, Wellington "did not deem it expedient to make any movement, excepting for the assembly of the troops at their several alarm posts, till he should hear of the decided movement of the enemy." [1]

At this time, that is, on the evening of the 14th, neither Blucher nor Wellington could know, what we know, that Napoleon's object was Sombref and Quatre Bras. He had it still in his power to take other courses instead of that course he had resolved to take, and he was eminently a general who did not fear to adopt bold and unexpected tactics. Wellington, therefore, who made no move except on accurate and ample information, could not be expected to concentrate his army upon receiving the meagre reports supplied by his own and the Prussian outposts; the more especially because the devices adopted by Napoleon on the frontier between Valenciennes and Dunquerque helped to confirm his view that some attack would be made from the side of the Scheldt. The information in the hands of both generals on the eve of the 14th would not enable any one to say whether the main attack would be made from Beaumont or from Lille; and it is quite impossible to understand the situation of the allied generals on the night of the 14th, unless we exclude from our minds the knowledge

[1] Wellington's Commentary on General Clausewitz.

we have of Napoleon's fixed intentions. The French were in force, Napoleon was among them; what was he about to do? That is a question we can answer, but it is not a question which could have been answered either by Blucher or Wellington on the evening of the 14th. The Duke of Wellington himself tells us that he did not "at first give credit to the reports of the intention of the enemy to attack by the valleys of the Sambre and Meuse." And he has given his reasons: "The enemy had destroyed the roads leading through these valleys," and the Duke "considered that Buonaparte might have made his attack upon the allied armies in the Netherlands and upon the provinces on the left bank of the Rhine, by other lines, with more advantage." The scanty information he had received did not shake his general views, and thus it befell that, on the night of the 14th, he did not act upon the report that the French were conjectured to have appeared that day, in force, near Solre sur Sambre and Beaumont.

The night of the 14th of June, 1815, passed quickly away. Before a single French soldier had moved, the whole of the Prussian army, the corps of Ziethen excepted, was in motion; the soldiers of Bulow were collecting at Liége, those of Pirch I. at Namur, those of Thielemann at Ciney. Napoleon is made to say, in the "Memoirs of St. Helena," that he calculated on the hussar-like promptitude of Blucher, inferring from this characteristic that he would be the first to concentrate, and more eager to succour Wellington if the latter were attacked, than Wellington would be to succour Blucher. If this be not, like so many reasons given in those "Memoirs," a reason formed after the fact, it is manifest that Napoleon's expectations were fulfilled, and more than fulfilled. What Napoleon did not expect was that the active and venturesome Blucher would be able to concentrate any force at

Sombref before Napoleon himself had concentrated at Fleurus a force more than sufficient to drive away whatever might be before them. He was also right in characterizing Wellington as "circumspect" in his movements, but he was in error when he judged that the marches of the Duke would be slow. Assuming that the "Memoirs" correctly represent the views of Napoleon at the outset of the campaign, it is in them that the root of his greatest error is to be found. That error consisted in the undervaluing of his adversaries. Having inferred from his imperfect estimate of their characters what they would do, he proceeded throughout upon that fatal principle, without ascertaining, by actual and close observation, whether their actions corresponded with his hypothesis. As the story is unfolded we shall have ample evidence of the correctness of this view.

§ 3. *Opening of the Campaign.*

The French army, massed in three columns, was under arms at the appointed hour on the morning of the 15th. The general order of movement directed the two corps of Reille and D'Erlon to march at three o'clock, following the right bank of the Sambre. Reille was to cross at the bridge of Marchienne, a little above Charleroi; D'Erlon was first directed upon Charleroi, but subsequently ordered to cross at Marchienne, or the bridge of Alnes, between Marchienne and Thuin. The bulk of the army in the central position of Beaumont was to move in succession upon Charleroi by Ham-sur-Eure. Pajol's light cavalry was to lead the way, mounting in the saddle and starting at half-past two. Vandamme was to follow at three; Lobau at four; the different divisions of the Guard between four and six, but the cavalry of the Guard not

until eight. The three corps of cavalry remaining with Grouchy were to move at intervals of half-an-hour, beginning at half-past five. All these troops were to make for Charleroi. On the right Gérard was to march at three o'clock; the original direction of this column was altered from Charleroi to Chatelet, below Charleroi, and Gérard was instructed to keep a good look-out on his right flank towards Namur. In rear of all went the baggage, rigorously reduced to a stinted regulation allowance.

This order of movement was executed as designed, with two exceptions. Reille carried his corps steadily along the right bank of the Sambre, driving before him the Prussians, who, nevertheless, contested every village, but who were pushed on by the torrent of Frenchmen pouring down the valley. By ten o'clock Reille had obtained possession of the right bank of the Sambre as far as Marchienne, had seized the bridge connecting the two sections of that village, and had begun to defile his column through its crooked streets and over the river. D'Erlon followed, but slowly. The bad country roads had been made worse by the march of Reille's troops; hence D'Erlon made but little progress. His flanking parties crossed the river at Lobbes, and patrolled towards Mons and Binche, a movement which caused General Chassé to collect his division on the river Haine. Gérard did not march from Philippeville until five o'clock. His brigades were in motion, when the soldiers were startled by a report that Lieutenant-General Bourmont, the commander of the division in advance, had deserted to the enemy. The report proved to be true. Bourmont and his staff had quitted the head of the column at Florenne, whence he had the audacity to write a letter to Gérard, setting forth very lame reasons for this act of treason.[1] It has been asserted that Napoleon

[1] Bourmont, according to Sir Francis Head, rode into Charleroi

altered the direction of Gérard's column in consequence of Bourmont's desertion; and it seems probable, for Gérard was moving upon Charleroi, according to Colonel Charras, when he received Bourmont's letter. Later in the morning the fourth corps was directed to cross the Sambre at Chatelet, and the desertion of Bourmont, reported at head-quarters, may have induced Napoleon to make that alteration in his original plan. Gérard, marching through a deep, broken, and roadless country, did not reach Chatelet with the head of his column until three in the afternoon. He found the bridge unbroken and the village unoccupied; for the Prussians, Charleroi being then captured, had fallen back towards Fleurus.

The desertion of Bourmont was not the only or principal mishap. The officer sent by Soult to the third corps with the order of march fell from his horse and broke a thigh, so that at six o'clock Vandamme's troops were still on the ground where they had passed the night! The sixth corps, coming up in rear through a thick morning mist, found the road blocked, and it is from Janin, an officer in Lobau's staff, that we learn the true cause of the delay. When Vandamme got his orders he was soon on the move, and passed the defile in his front with quickness and precision. Informed of the error, and anxious to provide a support for the cavalry, Napoleon put the Young Guard in motion by cross roads upon Charleroi. Pajol

about mid-day on the 16th, a misprint for 15th. Sir Francis says he was close to General Ziethen when Bourmont gave up the famous order of movement for the day, and declared that he had executed a cherished intention of betraying Napoleon. The "Memoirs" says that Bourmont deserted on the 14th. It was not so. He deserted on the 15th, reaching the Prussians when the French were within sight of Charleroi; a fact which deprives the act of desertion of any military importance.

and Domont had ridden off between two and three. They had easily swept backwards all the Prussian outposts as far as Marcinelle, a suburb of Charleroi. Here they were brought to a stand. A raised causeway, three hundred yards in length, connected Marcinelle with the bridge over the Sambre. The bridge-head was barricaded, and the hedges on the eastern side were lined with light troops. Pajol attempted to carry the causeway at a gallop, but a fire of musketry smote his horsemen in flank and front, and he was compelled to retire. Now, Vandamme should have been close behind him, and ready to fall on; yet it was seven before he quitted his bivouacs. He was still afar; it was not until the Young Guard, under Duhesme, arrived, that the causeway and the bridge were carried; and it was noon before the light cavalry of the French rode through the passage opened for them by Duhesme's soldiers. Thus the centre column began to pass the river, but Napoleon had been obliged to employ the Guard.

At this moment, then, that is, about noon on the 15th, the heads of the left and centre columns were over the Sambre. The rear of the left, D'Erlon's corps, was still struggling down the valley; the rear of the centre, which should have been the head, was two hours distant from Charleroi; and the right, Gérard's corps, winding its way through deep roads and a rough country, was three hours from Chatelet. It is obvious that the first part of the programme had not been executed. Napoleon had not passed the Sambre at noon; yet he had in hand part of the Imperial Guard, the whole of Reille's corps, the light cavalry of the Guard, and two divisions of Grouchy's horse; and there was nothing before him except the scattered battalions and partially formed brigades of Ziethen's corps threading their devious way towards Fleurus. The only offensive movement on the French side was made by Pajol,

who followed the battalion, which retreated from Charleroi, on the road to Gilly, that is, the high road to Namur, and who sent General Clary with a regiment of hussars along the Brussels road, to communicate with Reille, now entering Jumet, and to co-operate with him in cutting off the Prussians, who were rallying from right to left.

Ziethen's corps had occupied an immense tract of country, stretching from the neighbourhood of Binche to Sossoye, in the valley of the Meuse. Three brigades were on and in front of the Sambre—the 1st, under Baron von Steinmetz, on the right; the 2nd, under General von Pirch II., in the centre; the 4th, under General von Henkel, on the left; while the 3rd, held in reserve, under General von Jagow, was at Fleurus. The French attack bore upon the 1st and 2nd, for the slow movement of Gérard from Philippeville permitted the 4th to fall back without much annoyance. But the brigades of Pirch II. and Steinmetz ran some risks, and were frequently forced to fight in order to gain time. Steinmetz was in real danger until he had passed Gosselies, for his troops were all on the west of the road to Brussels; through Gosselies lay their line of retreat, and between them and Gosselies ran the Piéton, a tributary of the Sambre. They had to be collected from widely separated posts, and to seek safety in crossing the road. Reille's vehement march, close pursuit, and rapid capture of Marchienne, seriously endangered the retreat of the 1st Prussian brigade, because the passage of the Sambre at Marchienne gave Reille the means of marching straight upon Gosselies, and the arrival of Clary from Charleroi rendered it more probable that the retreating Prussians would be cut off. Ziethen, foreseeing the peril, sent a regiment from the reserve at Fleurus to occupy Gosselies, in conjunction with Lutzow's lancer regiment. It was a critical moment, for Steinmetz

was still on the right bank of the Piéton when Clary's hussars appeared at Jumet, and in his rear marched the leading infantry division of Reille's corps. Lutzow, seeing the danger which threatened the 1st brigade, issued forth, and, charging with resolution, drove the French hussars back upon Jumet. This happy charge enabled Steinmetz to pass the Piéton, and hold in check the head of Reille's column, now pressing on, while his main body retreated by Heppignies upon Fleurus, followed by General Girard, commanding a division of Reille's corps.

Steinmetz had just gone off when Ney arrived to take the command of the 1st and 2nd corps and the light cavalry of the Guard, which, however, he was not to use. He had only been directed to join the army on the 11th. Hastening from his country house to Paris, and thence to Beaumont, he found himself at the latter late in the night, but without horses. It chanced that Marshal Mortier, appointed to command the Guard, had fallen ill; Ney bought from him two horses, and, at eleven o'clock, attended only by Colonel Heymés, he set out for Charleroi. About half-past four he came up with Napoleon at the fork of the Namur and Brussels roads, in front of Charleroi,[1] and he was directed

[1] A remarkable, but somewhat dull book, published, in 1841, by Lieutenant-Colonel de Baudus, who was on Soult's staff in 1815, contains the description of a striking scene not noticed by any other contemporary writer, so far as I am aware. It is this: "After having passed the Sambre at Charleroi," he writes, "Napoleon, wishing to see the troops on the march, ascended the high ground which commands the right bank [whence they came], and, as the road is very narrow where he stopped, he took his station at the entrance of a large court, caused a chair to be brought, in which he sat down and soon fell into a profound sleep. It would be impossible, without having been present, to form a just idea of the enthusiasm manifested by the soldiers, and I cannot express the indignation which possessed me when I saw that those *vivats*, these cries of joy, noble and energetic translation of the infamous shouts of the Roman Gladiators: *Morituri salutamus te Cæsar*, were no more able

at once to take command of the corps of D'Erlon and Reille, and, with them, still widely separated, with Piré's cavalry, and the light horse of the Guard—which he was not to use—Ney was told to drive back the enemy. He had no other instructions.

While the 1st Prussian brigade was extricating itself from threatened destruction, the 2nd had been collected by Pirch II. The long delay enforced upon Pajol at Charleroi had given the Prussian troops on the right bank of the Sambre, east and west of Charleroi, time to assemble and reach the Namur road in good order. They had been followed by Pajol and Excelmans, but these horsemen were compelled to halt in front of Pirch II., who had contrived to occupy a showy position on the hills and in the woods behind Gilly, and between the French and Fleurus. The Prussians, extended from Soleilmont to the left bank of the Sambre, presented a line of battle which Grouchy's cavalry dared not assail. This position was secure, because Steinmetz occupied the attention of Girard, who might otherwise have cut in upon its right rear; because Gérard, whose corps menaced the left, had only just touched upon the bridge of Chatelet, and because the Prussians stood across the roads converging upon Fleurus. But it was not their object to fight a battle: they were only displayed that they might retard the march of the French. Grouchy, seeing this barrier to his progress, rode back to Charleroi for instructions. He met Vandamme's corps, which had at length defiled through Charleroi, marching down the Namur road, and he found Marshal Ney, who had just joined the army, receiving instructions from the Emperor. Ney rode off to Gosselies, and Napoleon and Grouchy hastened to Gilly. It was now nearly six o'clock, and the

to wake him when he fell asleep than they were to keep him awake when they first broke forth."

Prussians, who had been assailed at eight in the morning at Charleroi, were still standing in battle array not five miles from that city. Twice had the progress of the French cavalry been arrested because no infantry were at hand. At length a force of all arms was collected, and Napoleon, rapidly scanning the enemy's position, directed an attack upon all points. The infantry moving in echelon from the right, the cavalry of Excelmans striking at both flanks, the Prussians waited no longer. Exchanging shots with the French, they fell back with measured steps. The French cavalry on the Fleurus road were stopped by an abattis, and on the extreme right they found no opportunity of reaching the enemy. Napoleon, eager to strike, suddenly directed his escort, consisting of four squadrons under General Letort, upon three battalions retiring on the French right of the Fleurus road. Letort, an intrepid officer, charged home, cut up one battalion, but failed to touch the other two, one of which, protected by a display of cavalry, got into the wood, while another, forming square, beat off the horse, and retreated in safety. General Letort was killed. The Prussians continued to fall back, and in such fine order that even Napoleon, who led the pursuit, could not get at them. At dusk they were in and behind Fleurus, but the French halted at Lambusart, and Napoleon, overcome by fatigue, returned to meditate, or sleep, at Charleroi.

§ 4. *Ney at Frasne.*

When Ney joined the head of Reille's corps at Gosselies, and learned the situation of his command, as a measure of precaution, he halted two divisions, those of Foy and Prince Jerome,[1] and posted them in that town and in the wood of

[1] Colonel Charras states that Guilleminot really led this division.

Lombuc. His next business was to discover the enemy, whom he had been ordered to drive back. Piré, therefore, with his cavalry division, was sent to feel for the enemy along the road to Brussels, and Bachelu's infantry were put in motion to follow and support the horsemen. The leading squadrons of Piré soon touched the outposts of the extreme left of Wellington's army. The Dutch-Belgian generals stationed between Braine le Comte and Mons were on the alert, and engaged in concentrating their brigades. Aroused by the increasing cannonade about Charleroi, warned of the French advance by flying peasants and wounded Prussian soldiers, Prince Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar had united his brigade at Quatre Bras, except a battalion of Nassauers under Major Norman, and Byleveld's Dutch battery of horse artillery, which held the advanced post of Frasne. Piré, moving along the high road, drove in the outlying picket of infantry, and testing the strength of the supports by a more rapid advance, he was himself compelled to fall back before the shower of grape poured into his squadrons from the guns of the Dutchmen. Ney, who had followed along the road with the light cavalry of the Guard, now came up, and hastening the march of Bachelu's infantry, attacked Frasne with the first battalions that arrived. Major Norman then withdrew the Nassauers, under cover of the grape from the Dutch guns, and Ney followed; but seeing the infantry of the enemy retire into the Wood of Bossu, observing the heads of columns in the direction of Quatre Bras, hearing the warm cannonade in his right rear towards Fleurus, and having only a part of Bachelu's division in hand, he advanced no farther. The sun had set. He knew not what progress Napoleon had made; he knew not the strength of the enemy in front; he had received no order to occupy Quatre Bras; he therefore retired upon Frasne; and, leaving there Bachelu's division, supported

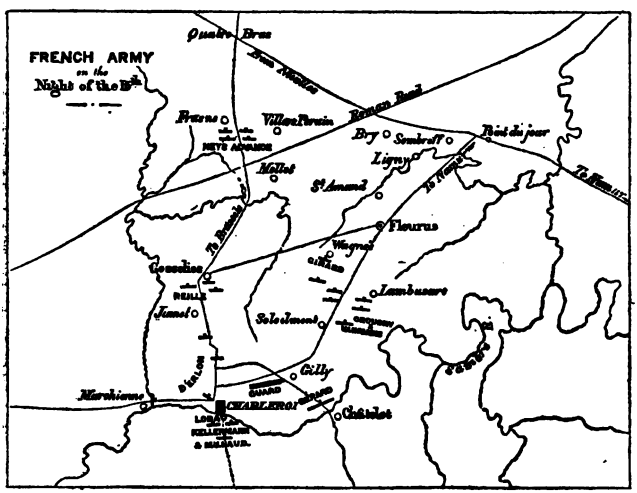
by Piré and the light cavalry of the Guard, he rode back to Gosselies, and thence to Charleroi.

§ 5. *Marches and final Positions of the French Army.*

Thus far the French army. Whatever may have been Napoleon's intentions, we have only to deal now with what he accomplished. What, then, was effected on the 15th? Napoleon had carried the greater part of his army to the left bank of the Sambre. He had diminished by 1,200 men, in killed, wounded and prisoners, the corps of General Ziethen; but the skill and energy of that able officer had prevented Napoleon from cutting him up in detail. Ziethen —and it was a brilliant exploit—had concentrated his scattered corps in defiance of the whole French army, had twice, at Charleroi and Gilly, delayed its progress, and had stopped it definitively for the day at Fleurus. Ney had also been arrested by the display of force at Quatre Bras.

At this stage it is essential to obtain an accurate conception of the position occupied by the French. The army was still in three columns. First, take note of the posts occupied by the heads of those columns. On the left we have seen that Ney had pushed forward as far as Frasne. In the centre Pajol was at Lambusart, and between the centre and left stood Girard, near Heppignies and Wagnée. On the right Gérard was in front of Chatelet. But the left column extended backwards to the right bank of the Sambre, from Frasne, that is, to Marchienne, a distance of fourteen miles; the centre covered the road from Lambusart to the right bank of the Sambre, behind Charleroi, a distance of nine miles; the right was united on the left bank of the Sambre, just in front of Chatelet. The leading battalions and squadrons of the centre had been on foot for eighteen hours, and had marched five-and-twenty miles. The leading battalions

and squadrons on the left had been on foot for the same time, and had marched the same distance. The Guard had been halted between Gilly and Charleroi, after a march of eighteen miles; D'Erlon had bivouacked at Marchienne, that is, when his troops had traversed about the same distance; and Gérard had been compelled to halt when he had debouched from Chatelet, upwards of twenty miles from his



starting point, Philippeville. The French army had thus been drawn together in an irregular square, the angles of which were Lambusart, Gosselies, Marchienne, and Chatelet, while a spur shot forward from the angle in the left front as far as Frasne; and Lobau, with the 6th corps and most of the heavy cavalry, stood backwards from the centre, in rear of Charleroi. Nevertheless, in three hours the right

and centre might have been massed in front of Fleurus, and the whole of the left, with the exception of Girard's division and the troops at Frasne, might have been concentrated at Gosselies; and thus, had he so chosen, Napoleon might, at five or six in the morning of the 16th, have occupied Fleurus with the bulk of his army, and have launched 40,000 men at the same moment along the road to Brussels. He did not so decide; he had taken no decision whatever. He was satisfied—the result of the day's work had been all he could wish. He counted on the future without taking into his estimate the activity of his foes.

§ 6. *Prussian Movements.*

Blucher had been active all day. He had, by half-past four or five o'clock in the afternoon of the 15th, transferred his head-quarters from Namur to Sombref. The orders issued to Pirch I. and Thielemann had been obeyed. The former had collected the 2nd corps at Namur, one brigade excepted, which joined him the next morning, and by three o'clock in the afternoon, that is, as soon as Vandamme had entirely crossed the Sambre, Pirch I. was in position between Onoz and Mazy, on the Namur and Nivelles road, five miles from Sombref. Thielemann had collected his corps at Ciney; marching thence at half-past seven, half an hour after Vandamme quitted Beaumont, he reached Namur in the evening, and bivouacked in position in and near that town for the night. Thus Blucher had on the evening of the 15th two corps, that is, upwards of 60,000 men, in or near to the chosen position of Ligny; and one corps at Namur, fifteen miles from that position. The 4th corps, commanded by Bulow, however, was still at Liége, fifty miles from the point of concentration! As early as the 13th Bulow had been ordered to collect his brigades. On

the 14th he was directed to concentrate on Hannut. There was some misunderstanding, and the order was not executed; but Bulow sent word that he would be at Hannut on the 16th. Blucher assuming, as he had a right to do, that his orders had been obeyed, sent two despatches on the 15th to Hannut, directing Bulow to march thence upon Sombref. But as the earlier orders had not been obeyed, Bulow only arrived at Hannut to find that his absence had cost the loss of a battle to the Prussians.

§ 7. *Wellington's Information and Proceedings.*

Wellington's inaction on the 14th and 15th has exposed him to much censure. The reader will see from a simple statement of the facts whether it was just or unjust. We ought to place ourselves in his position, regard the situation from his point of view, and by the light of the correct information he had received. Head-quarters were at Brussels. Thither came all reports, and thence issued all orders. Long before the 14th the points of concentration for all the divisions had been designated, the troops had been ordered to assemble daily, by battalions, and practically the whole army was on the alert. Wellington knew from Sir Hussey Vivian that some movement of concentration was in progress, Napoleon, as he himself states, having arranged his outposts on the line of the Scheldt and Lys, to create expressly an impression that he was concentrating to his left. Wellington's own opinion, retained to the day of his death, was that Napoleon ought not to have attacked by the Sambre and Meuse, and he expected the Emperor, undoubtedly, upon the Scheldt, or between the Scheldt and Lys, or from Maubeuge upon Mons. Yet he was prepared for an attack by the Sambre and Meuse, and able to meet it, as the result showed. Wellington also knew that Napo-

leon had arrived on the frontier. But on the 14th he had no precise information whatever which could then have enabled him to form an otherwise than conjectural opinion of the intentions of Napoleon.

The British commander had remained at his head-quarters all day on the 14th. On the 15th he was still there, alert and watchful. No information reached him. The morning passed; noon arrived; still not a word came from the outposts. The reason of this is plain enough. The French did not approach the outposts of the British army until late in the forenoon, when D'Erlon's flankers appear to have hovered about the Prussian quarters near Binche, and even, so it is reported, entered that place. Hence the Duke was dependent for correct information upon General Ziethen, and although the contrary has been asserted, the Duke's own statements show that General Ziethen did not send a word. As the Duke himself puts it: Ziethen was attacked at Thuin at four in the morning; he himself, with part of his corps, was at Charleroi at ten o'clock; and long before that he knew of the movement of the whole French army. "Yet the report [even of the attack on Thuin] was not received at Brussels till three o'clock in the afternoon." Now Brussels is only thirty-five miles from Charleroi, and the British outposts at Frasne were only distant from Charleroi twelve miles. So that, allowing for accidents, Prince Bernhard might have been warned at ten, and the Duke himself might have received this positive information not later than one, if not earlier. Moreover, had Ziethen distinctly stated that large columns were in motion, coming down the valley of the Sambre and from Beaumont, Wellington would have known how to read the information.

It was not until three o'clock, when the Prince of Orange arrived to dine with the Duke, that he received

the news—of what? that the French had attacked, not Charleroi, but Thuin and Lobbes. In other words, his latest information from the front was dated nine in the morning. He was told that the enemy "appeared to menace Charleroi;" he had heard nothing further indicating the movement, either of the left or centre columns of Napoleon's army. Moreover, the Prince of Orange brought the intelligence that Binche had been occupied but afterwards abandoned, a statement to this day of doubtful accuracy. What "circumspect" general would move his troops upon information so vague and uncertain? A clear report direct from Ziethen would have settled every doubt, but no such report came in. At length, intelligence arrived from the Prussian head-quarters. General Müffling joined the Prince of Orange and Wellington. He had a report, but what was it? That Thuin had been attacked; no more. Wellington, still perplexed and uncertain, took one decisive step—he prepared for any emergency by ordering his divisions to concentrate. The Duke's information authorized him in regarding the advance of Napoleon upon the inner flanks of the two armies as highly probable, but he had no right to assume as a certainty that this was the project of Napoleon. His position between three and five on the afternoon of the 15th was in no way like that of Blucher, for at three o'clock Blucher knew he had the whole French army on his hands; he could almost see them, unrolling their great masses in the valley on both banks of the Sambre; his brigadiers had been thrust backward on all sides by the pressure on their front and flanks of nearly 100,000 men. Wellington had before him two reports—one that an outpost had been carried early in the morning; another that French troops appeared to menace Charleroi—those troops being Pajol's horsemen.

Therefore, Wellington, never precipitate or nervous, contented himself with issuing orders about five o'clock for the assembly of each division. Chassé and Perponcher were to assemble at Nivelles. [Perponcher, better informed, and having the enemy before him, on his own responsibility moved his second brigade to Quatre Bras, to sustain Prince Bernhard.] Alten was to collect his troops at Braine le Comte, and march at once on Nivelles, if it should prove *certain* that the attack of the French was on Wellington's left and Blucher's right. Cooke was to assemble at Enghien, ready to move at a moment's notice. So far the divisions on the immediate front. Further to the right centre, Clinton was to assemble at Ath, and Colville at Grammont. The cavalry were to be called in at once to Ninhove, with the exception of a German regiment left to patrol between the Scheldt and Lys, and General Dornberg's brigade, which was to concentrate at Vilvorde. The reserve, around Brussels, under the Duke's own hand, and always prepared, was to be ready to march at daybreak on the 16th.

Now we ask the reader whether these orders do not contain all that the information received up to that moment would warrant? We repeat that information. It was that Thuin had been attacked, that Charleroi appeared to be menaced, that Frenchmen had been seen near or at Binche. Would these statements warrant a general in directing the whole of his army upon Quatre Bras? We venture to say that they would not. At this very moment, that is, between eight and nine o'clock, it was the belief of many superior officers at Brussels that Napoleon was advancing towards Binche, and that that would be the point of concentration for the army,[1] a belief

[1] Frazer's Letters.

showing what were the prevalent inferences from the information that had been received.

Later in the evening came the decisive news that Napoleon had crossed the Sambre at Charleroi, and had followed General Ziethen to Fleurus. There was no longer room to doubt that a formidable attack had been made upon the right of the Prussians. Wellington forthwith issued orders for the march of the whole army to its left. He asserts himself that "the whole moved on that evening and in the night, each division and portion separately." This is undoubtedly true as regards the assembly of the divisions in obedience to the first order on the 15th, but the more distant brigades did not receive the order to march to the left until the morning of the 16th.[1]

The movement now prescribed was this: Alten was to march at once to Nivelles; Cooke to Braine le Comte; Clinton, Colville, and the cavalry to Enghien. After issuing this order, the Duke of Wellington went, as is well known, to a ball given by the Duchess of Richmond, and remained until a late hour. His behaviour on this memorable night was so natural and unconstrained that not one person there could have inferred that he was in a few hours about to measure himself with Napoleon.

The orders he had given could be forwarded to their destination within six hours after they were issued, and any one who will take the trouble to measure the distances from Brussels to the head-quarters of the several divisions, will see that the despatches could reach more than one in half that time. The Duke states that his orders *did* reach all parts of the army in six hours after he had issued them. In that case, the orders to Clinton

[1] Clinton's division and Prince Frederick of Orange did not receive this second order until that day.

and Prince Frederick could not have been forwarded from Brussels until the morning of the 16th, for the historian of the 52nd regiment, part of Clinton's division, states that the order did not arrive until the regiment was on its way to the parade ground, and that they did not "form division until 10 A.M. on that day." Prince Frederick did not receive the order of movement until the same time; and Lambert's brigade at Ghent was in a like situation. Nevertheless, the greater part of the army was warned at an early hour, for within four-and-twenty hours from the time he received decisive information, the Duke of Wellington had collected upwards of 30,000 men at Quatre Bras.

We may here remark that the criticism of Colonel Charras on the "procrastination" of Wellington during the 15th rests upon two grave blunders. First, he states that Wellington had received *at* nine o'clock in the morning a despatch from Ziethen, dated Charleroi, announcing that his outposts had been attacked on the Sambre. The Duke is cited as an authority for the statement. But the Duke says nothing of the kind. Writing to the Duc de Berri, at half-past nine in the evening, he says that he had received no news from Charleroi since nine in the morning; meaning clearly that the *date* of his latest information from the front was nine in the morning. Even this was not a despatch from Ziethen, but a report brought in, as we have seen, by the Prince of Orange at three, and confirmed by Baron Müffling a little later. We have seen what this report amounted to. It was that Thuin had been attacked. Wellington did not know whether the French were coming on the road to Brussels by Charleroi or by the road through Mons. The report indicated a movement on the Sambre, nothing more; and

on the basis of this report Wellington concentrated his divisions.

The next error is a very curious one. Wellington had ordered Alten to march upon Nivelles, provided certain news were received of the attack of the French on the inner flanks of the Allies. Charras interprets this qualification to apply to Chassé and Perponcher, as well as to Alten, and says that Wellington no longer followed out the plan agreed to between himself and Blucher, but desired to withdraw the few troops he had upon the Brussels and Charleroi road, "even in case the attack were directed" against the Prussian right and the British left. This is a misunderstanding of the terms of the order of movement, and especially of the qualification which applied solely to Alten. But the criticism goes further. Wellington ordered the Dutch-Belgian divisions to assemble at Nivelles on the faith of the meagre information of the attack on Thuin. We have shown that the common belief among the superior officers at Brussels, on the evening of the 15th, was that Napoleon would come on by Binche. But at Nivelles and Braine le Comte the staff had more certain and fuller information by five or six o'clock, and when Perponcher disobeyed the order to concentrate upon Nivelles, and carried his second brigade to reinforce Prince Bernhard at Quatre Bras, he did certainly what Wellington would have done had he been at Nivelles or Braine le Comte. General Constant de Rebecque, chief of the staff to the Prince of Orange, deserves credit for directing, at an early hour, the assembly of the brigades of Chassé and Perponcher; but even at two o'clock he did not venture to place more than one brigade at Quatre Bras, the brigade already there. He detained one brigade at Nivelles; he placed Chassé's whole division at its place of assembly, Fayt-lez-Seneffe; and

Callaert's cavalry behind the Haine, that is, in the direction of Binche and Maubeuge. Perponcher deserves credit for taking on himself the responsibility of moving his second brigade to Quatre Bras, instead of obeying the order of concentration upon Nivelles. But it must be remembered that Perponcher absolutely knew that a strong force was at Frasne, whereas Wellington, when he issued the order of concentration, only knew that Thuin had been attacked. When we give great praise to commanders of divisions and brigades for assembling their men in the face of the enemy without waiting for a formal order, we praise them for executing the especial business which they were appointed to perform. We do nothing more.

The criticism of Colonel Charras on the conduct of Wellington during the 15th is influenced throughout by the knowledge Colonel Charras had of the actual movements of Napoleon. The conduct of Wellington was dictated by the knowledge Wellington had of the movements of Napoleon; and we have seen that it was not until ten or eleven o'clock in the evening that full information reached the head-quarters at Brussels. The degree to which the knowledge of the movements of Napoleon influenced Colonel Charras is shown in his violent assertion that Wellington should have transferred his head-quarters to Braine le Comte or Nivelles *on the* morning of the 15th, that is, before he knew that the French army had made any movement in any direction whatever!

These considerations show that there is no accurate military criticism, except that which rests on a clear chronological conception of events; and no correct method of writing military history, except that which enables the writer to shut his eyes to the future, and to fix his whole attention resolutely and impartially on the present.

It may be an open question to this day whether Wellington's disposition of his army in cantonments was good or bad, but it can no longer be doubted that his movements on the 15th were sound and judicious, and such as were warranted by the information he received from time to time. The explanation of the delay in the transmission of the Duke's orders, for delay there was, has never been afforded us to this day (1864). Not one divisional commander should have been, at a later hour than 4 A.M. on the 16th, without orders to march. The explanation, perhaps, lies in the defective staff arrangements, or it may be some mismanagement of the letter parties and relays. The Horse Guards of 1815 did not supply the Duke with the best kind of men for his staff.

CHAPTER V.

THE MORNING OF THE 16TH OF JUNE.

§ 1. *Napoleon: Charleroi and Fleurus.*

THE French army was aroused from its slumbers at daybreak on the 16th. The troops still occupied the positions we have described. The sun rose, and the hours sped on, but no order of movement came from the imperial head-quarters. Six o'clock arrived, seven struck. The army remained motionless, except that, in the Prussian front, Grouchy and his outposts were on the alert, eagerly watching the gathering of masses of troops above the plain of Fleurus. It is written that the old soldiers, and there were many in the army of Napoleon, stood in not mute astonishment at this inactivity. We have shown that Napoleon, his wearied troops having rested for five hours, might have concentrated, one mass near Fleurus, and another in front of Gosselies, by five in the morning. Yet at seven, some say at eight, not a man had moved from the bivouac of the preceding night.

This inactivity is admitted to be one of the puzzles of the campaign. Napoleon, whose motions were wont to be so swift, was now a laggard. He who the day before had pushed on his columns for five-and-twenty miles, now left them to fret in their bivouacs, and wonder at the delay of

the Emperor. It is the more remarkable because the several corps had been ordered to hold themselves ready to march at any moment after two.

Whatever may be the explanation of Napoleon's conduct it must be found in the facts or not at all. In this search the "Memoirs of St. Helena" afford no aid. Napoleon has not deigned to account for the use he made of his time on the morning of the 16th, but has rapidly passed over that important period, not without stating in a few lines much that is untrue, and entirely without a hint as to his own delay, or the causes thereof. Those causes must be sought elsewhere.

It will be remembered that Ney, when he quitted Frasne, passed through Gosselies and rode on to Charleroi. Here he found Napoleon where we left him on his return from Gilly, but somewhat recovered from his fatigue, and taking supper. Ney sat with him until two o'clock in the morning.[1] It may be assumed that they conversed much during the period of Ney's visit. What was the substance of their conversation? This is precisely what no one can now tell us. That Ney rendered an account of the position of his advanced troops on the Brussels road is a matter of course. He must also have referred to the occupation of Gosselies by Foy and Jerome; to the position of D'Erlon, between Jumet and Marchienne, and to the fact that Kellerman was still on the right bank of the Sambre. Nor could he have neglected to describe the kind of resistance he met with at Frasne, to frame some estimate of the number of the troops opposed to him, and to point out how dangerously far in advance of the Emperor was the column on the road to Brussels. But this is all conjecture. An ingenious French author[2] has imagined the nature of the conversa-

[1] Heymès: "Relation de la Campagne de 1815."

[2] Edgar Quinet.

tion between Napoleon and Ney. It is this, that Ney eagerly pressed Napoleon to move the bulk of the army to the left, and strike at the British, because Wellington was the more formidable adversary; but that Napoleon, although disposed to attack the Prussians first, could not form any decisive opinion. Hence, it is inferred that Napoleon gave no order to Ney for the occupation of Quatre Bras at daybreak on the 16th. But this is also a mere speculative account of the famous interview between these two men. What actually occurred we shall never know; Ney died without telling us, and Napoleon is not to be believed. For, as we shall immediately show, the statement in the "Memoirs," that "during the night" Ney received an order to occupy Quatre Bras at daybreak, is entirely untrue. Soult has said that the Emperor had no thought of occupying Quatre Bras on the evening of the 15th. Napoleon has said that to have occupied Sombref on the evening of the 15th would have spoiled his plans; and the military authorities are all of opinion that the occupation of Quatre Bras, before Sombref was in possession of the French, would have been a false and perilous move. Moreover, and this is the decisive statement:—Reille has declared that at seven in the morning of the 16th he went to Marshal Ney for orders, and that Marshal Ney told him he waited himself for orders from the Emperor. Hence it is manifest, that whatever may have been the nature of the conference at Charleroi, it did not lead the Emperor to form any decision whatever, and that Ney departed for Gosselies on the understanding that Napoleon would send him orders when he had made up his mind what they should be.

Now glance at the disposition of the French army at daybreak, nay, as late as seven in the morning. Vandamme and Grouchy waiting for orders in front of Fleurus; Gérard

waiting for orders in front of Chatelet, impatient, eager, nervous, and finding a congenial listener in General Excelmans; the Guard, between Gilly and Charleroi, also waiting for orders; Lobau, Kellerman, the heavy cavalry of the Guard behind Charleroi, waiting for orders also; D'Erlon, with his leading battalions at Jumet and his rear at Marchienne, waiting orders like the rest. Ney and Reille actually conferring on the same subject; and yet we are asked to believe that while Napoleon kept the bulk of his army motionless, Ney had been directed to thrust himself headlong, at daybreak, into the British lines, at Quatre Bras.

At length, between seven and eight o'clock, Napoleon's meditations appear to have taken some shape. So far as we can discover, the actual information in his possession consisted of these facts: he knew the distribution of his own troops as a basis, and he knew their strength. He knew that Marshal Ney had met with enemies on the Brussels road, that the limit of that marshal's progress was Frasne, and that he still awaited at Gosselies the orders of the Emperor. Napoleon also knew that General Ziethen was in and behind Fleurus; and between seven and eight he learned from a report, dated six in the morning, and sent in by Grouchy, that the Prussian columns were "arriving" by the Namur road, and forming near Ligny. That is all. Wrapped up in his own thoughts, the victim of his own conjectures, he hesitated for a time, and then arrived at a conclusion apparently independent of the facts.

First, he divided his army into two wings and a reserve. The left wing consisted of the first and second corps, Girard's division excepted; of Kellerman's heavy cavalry, and of the light cavalry of the Guard—a force, if united, numbering 33,520 infantry, 8,800 cavalry, and 96 guns. Ney was placed in command of this wing.

The right wing consisted of the third, fourth, and sixth corps, together with three of Grouchy's four cavalry divisions—that is, of 42,869 infantry, of 15,023 cavalry, and 144 guns.

The reserve was composed of the Imperial Guard—13,206 infantry, 1,718 horse, and 96 guns. Grouchy commanded the right wing, and Napoleon himself the reserve.

Half an hour later, about half-past eight, Napoleon determined what these forces should do. We learn his intentions and general views from the despatches he dictated, and those dictated by Marshal Soult, in accordance with the orders of his chief. What do these despatches reveal?

First, as regards the right wing: Grouchy was to march forthwith upon Sombref, and there take up a position. Napoleon, "before noon," was to be in Fleurus at the head of the Guard. *If* he met with the enemy he would attack him, and push on an advanced guard and flankers as far as Gembloux. These were preliminary steps. At Gembloux, after he had defeated the enemy, he would determine further; perhaps at three o'clock, perhaps in the evening.

As to the left wing: as soon as the Emperor had determined on his future course, Ney was to be ready to march on Brussels. The Emperor desired to enter that city in the morning of the 17th, and Ney was to march in at seven o'clock. In order that he might be able to do this, Ney was to press forward and occupy Quatre Bras, Genappe, and Marbais. The light cavalry of the Guard were to be replaced by Kellerman's corps, and Kellerman's corps was to be posted at the junction of the Roman and the Brussels roads, so that if the Emperor wanted them he might have them.

It is clear from this, that between eight and nine in the

morning of the 16th Napoleon saw no cause for haste. He believed he should find some troops at Sombref, for Ziethen was in front of him at Fleurus; but he calculated that the Prussians would retire as he advanced, and, dominated by the idea that Blucher would concentrate at Namur, he seems to have given little weight to Grouchy's report, and hoped by three o'clock to be at Gembloux. In like manner he assumed that Wellington would concentrate at Nivelles, and that thus his two lieutenants might, shortly after noon, occupy the great road from Nivelles to Namur with advanced guards—the one at Genappe, the other at Gembloux; leaving Napoleon at liberty to enter Brussels suddenly. Nevertheless, although he did not expect resistance, he made, on paper, provision to meet it; for Ney, as we have seen, was, in addition to the division of Girard, already detached, to place another division at Marbais, within the Emperor's reach, and also to give him the option of using Kellerman if he pleased. Here are great projects put forward with a hesitation that shows a doubting mind, for not only was the left wing, nominally so strong, enfeebled by reductions, actual and possible, but the whole of the sixth corps was to be posted near Charleroi, in order that Count Lobau might be in a position to aid Ney or follow Napoleon.

The orders were sent off by Napoleon and by Soult. Ney received his despatches some time before eleven o'clock, and after ten. They were brought to him by Count Flahault, who did not start from Charleroi during the night, as Napoleon states, but about nine in the morning. In passing Gosselies Napoleon's aide-de-camp warned Reille, then waiting with his troops under arms. Reille warned D'Erlon, and Soult himself put in motion the horsemen of Kellerman, who, it may be remembered, were still on the right bank of the Sambre. Gérard and

Vandamme received their orders about half-past nine, and Grouchy at the same time learned that he was commander of the right wing, and also that he was to march forthwith upon Sombref, now visibly to *him*, at least, occupied by the bulk of the Prussian army.

Nevertheless, Grouchy took one step. After ten o'clock, with Vandamme's infantry and the dragoons of Excelmans, he occupied Fleurus; the Prussian cavalry retiring upon the elevations in front of Ligny as he advanced, and the horse batteries exchanging compliments. But he went no farther; for Gérard, not getting his orders until half-past nine, even if he had instantly set off, could not have reached Fleurus until eleven o'clock, and he did not actually arrive until much later. When, therefore, Napoleon came on to the plain of Fleurus with the Guard about one, he found Grouchy still there, and was able to see for himself the reason why.

The information previously obtained had been augmented before he quitted Charleroi. General Reille had forwarded to the Emperor the substance of a verbal report brought in by one of Girard's officers, from Wagnée. It stated that Fleurus was still occupied by light cavalry, and that masses of Prussians, coming from Namur, were gradually gaining ground about St. Amand. This report, therefore, confirmed the information forwarded by Grouchy; yet Napoleon drove incredulously towards Fleurus, unwilling to believe that Blucher had dared to court an encounter by concentrating so near the frontier, and right across his path.

Arrived at Fleurus, the Prussians were visible to him also. He mounted the steps of a windmill near the town, and surveyed the scene before him, still reluctant to believe even his own senses. He despatched several officers to the front, and he rode himself at a leisurely pace,

attended by a small staff, along the whole line of vedettes which covered the front of his divisions. More than an hour was spent in satisfying himself of the reality of the spectacle before him, and in forming a conception of the position occupied by the enemy. While he was thus engaged, his army, in obedience to his orders, formed in order of battle. Vandamme stood in front of Fleurus, with the division of Girard in his rear. Gérard's corps was posted in the centre, on the right of Fleurus, and on his right the two cavalry corps commanded by Pajol and Excelmans. The whole of the Guard and Milhaud's cuirassiers were in reserve, concealed behind a slight elevation of the ground. Napoleon's inspection of the Prussian position had not enabled him to arrive at an accurate conclusion. He saw that there were "troops" on the slopes and in the villages in front of him; he saw that they occupied a large position; but he could not bring himself to believe that three-fourths of the Prussian army were drawn up in battle array. Neither his own observations, nor the reports of his officers, convinced him that he had to fight an "army." But, a little before two, he had formed his plan of attack. Thinking that Blucher was posted in a position parallel to the Fleurus road, instead of directing his blows against Sombref, he determined to assail the villages of St. Amand and Ligny. The army, therefore, changed its position: Vandamme advanced his right brigade, and with the remainder took ground to his left, having Girard in reserve, and his outer flank protected by Domont's cavalry. He thus occupied a broken line on the south and east of St. Amand. Gérard advanced beyond Fleurus, throwing forward his right, and forming his columns in a line parallel with and in front of the chaussée, with a division facing to the right, and drawn up across the road. The cavalry of Excelmans and Pajol were in masses on the right of the

high road, with detached parties on that flank. In rear, the Imperial Guard stood on the left of Fleurus, a deep mass of infantry, cavalry, and guns; and on the right of Fleurus, Milhaud stood fast with his cuirassiers.

While the troops were taking up this new front, Napoleon caused Soult to write a despatch to Ney, dated 2 P.M., assigning to that marshal a series of operations differing materially from those enjoined by the despatches forwarded from Charleroi at nine in the morning. Believing he had to deal with only "a body of troops posted between Bry and Sombref," he notified to Ney that an attack would be made upon this force in half-an-hour. Ney was also to attack whatever was before him, and having "pressed" his adversaries "vigorously," Ney was to turn aside towards Napoleon, and co-operate in the work of enveloping "the body" of troops to which Napoleon referred. If, before Ney could arrive on the right rear of the Prussians, "the body of troops" was broken, Napoleon intimated that he would manœuvre in the direction of Ney's army to hasten his operations. This despatch was addressed to "Gosselies," and it is cited as a further proof that Napoleon, at two o'clock on the 16th, did not even suppose that Ney would be at Quatre Bras. The marshal, it should also be observed, was no longer instructed to push on to Genappe, sending only one division to Marbais. He was, after thrusting back the British, to march with his whole force down the Namur road. Napoleon's plans had thus been modified very considerably. His first scheme was to occupy, by three o'clock, a line stretching from Quatre Bras to Sombref, with advanced posts at Gembloux and Genappe. By two o'clock this scheme had broken down, and the junction of the two wings was to be effected between Quatre Bras and Sombref, as the result of a battle with an unknown force of Prussians who had "dared" to stand in the way.

During the interval between the arrival of Napoleon at Fleurus and his final resolve to fall upon his enemy, Wellington had ridden over from Quatre Bras, to communicate in person with Blucher. Lord Hardinge, then Sir Henry, had been requested by Blucher to proceed to Quatre Bras and solicit some assistance from the Duke. "I set out," he says, "but I had not proceeded far, when I saw a party of horse coming towards me, and observing that they had short tails, I knew at once that they were English, and soon distinguished the Duke. He was on his way to the Prussian head-quarters, thinking they might want some assistance; and he instantly gave directions for a supply of cavalry. 'How are they forming?' he inquired. 'In column, not in line,' I replied; 'the Prussian soldier, Blucher says, will not stand in line.' 'Then the artillery will play upon them, and they will be beaten damnably,' was the comment of the Duke." Wellington rode on and found Blucher near the mill of Bussy. There, while Napoleon was reconnoitring the Prussian position, and deciding upon measures intended to rout them by turning their right, Wellington and Blucher were concerting a similar plan for the destruction of their adversary. It was agreed that Blucher should receive battle, and that Wellington, as soon as possible, should move up from Quatre Bras troops which should be directed upon the left flank of the French. At this moment, there is reason to believe, Wellington calculated, and on good grounds, that more than one half of his army would be in line at Quatre Bras by three o'clock. From the heart of the Prussian position he rode back to Quatre Bras to find an enterprising and powerful force bent on seizing that post of vantage. He was disappointed in his anticipation of the numbers that would assemble there by three o'clock. But this is not the significant fact which should be commended to

the reader's notice. That fact is, that Napoleon had failed at the outset to separate the two armies, for there they were in close and solid communication—the two commanders-in-chief, though he knew it not, were conferring together on the hills overlooking his position; and we are justified in asserting that the foundation of the coming victory at Waterloo was laid in the memorable interview between Wellington and Blucher at the mill of Bussy.

§ 2. *Ney: Gosselies and Frasne.*

The position of Ney on the morning of the 16th was most perplexing. He had returned to Gosselies from Charleroi, after having engaged in a fruitless conversation with Napoleon. At seven o'clock he had not received any orders from the Imperial head-quarters, and not a man under his command had moved. He was still imperfectly informed of the strength of the force verbally placed at his disposal on the afternoon of the 15th. He did not know even the names of the colonels of his regiments. All he knew, in fact, was that his advanced posts were in front of Frasne, that the rear of his column was still on the right bank of the Sambre, that Girard's division, nominally under Reille's orders, was really detached, and that he was to make no use of the light cavalry of the Guard. It was only during the morning that, aided by Colonel Heymés, he obtained a correct "state" of Reille's corps.

After his conversation with that active officer, Ney rode off to Frasne. Arrived there, he collected all the information he could obtain, surveyed the front from his outposts, then skirmishing with the enemy, and, rather impatiently, as we may suppose, waited for orders from Napoleon. We may try to picture the country-side on which Ney was about to be so conspicuous an actor.

Before him lay an extensive plain, stretching away towards the north, very slightly broken by undulations, and traversed by the high road from Charleroi to Brussels. It was covered with rich crops, above which the roofs of the scattered homesteads were visible, and it was shut in by the wood of Delhutte on the east and by the distant wood of Bossu on the west. Three large farms, at nearly equal distances, diversified the monotony of the prospect: Péraumont on the east, at the extremity of the wood Delhutte, and not far from the Namur road; Gemioncourt in a little valley in the centre; and Pierpont on the west, at the southern extremity of the long and irregularly-shaped wood of Bossu. In this wood a tiny rivulet had its source, which, flowing through the Gemioncourt ravine, spread out into large pools farther to the eastward, and thence sluggishly went on to increase the waters of the Dyle. Beyond Gemioncourt, a good three-quarters of a mile, the Charleroi road crosses the highway from Nivelles to Namur, and the group of farmhouses at this point of intersection is called Quatre Bras, or the Cross Roads. Thence northwards towards Brussels the character of the country remained unchanged as far as Genappe, where the upper waters of the Dyle flow through a deeper valley, and where the elevations may be called hills or heights. Ney found this position of Quatre Bras occupied in greater force than it was on the night of the 15th; for the British army was in movement from Ath, Grammont, Enghien, Braine le Comte, Nivelles, and Brussels, and one division of the first corps was already in front of Quatre Bras.

At daybreak, the French were the more numerous; but at five, as we have stated, General Perponcher had arrived with part of his second brigade from Nivelles. Instead of obeying the strict letter of Wellington's first order, issued when the Duke was not aware of the attack

on Charleroi, and, withdrawing Prince Bernhard from Quatre Bras to Nivelles, Perponcher obeyed its spirit and reinforced Prince Bernhard. As soon as he arrived, Perponcher threw forward his light troops, drove the French outposts in upon Frasne, recovered some of the ground lost overnight, and kept up a continuous skirmish with his foes. The Prince of Orange arrived at six, bringing more troops, and soon after the infantry of the whole division, one battalion excepted, was present—nearly 7,000 men, with 16 guns. The Prince carried the greater part of his small force to the front, and pressed the French more closely by occupying the wood of Delhutte on his left. Ney found this state of affairs when he came into Frasne from Gosselies. Wellington, who had quitted Brussels at daybreak, must have reached Quatre Bras about the same time. He closely surveyed the front, approved of the arrangements made by the Prince of Orange, confided to him the defence of the position, and then rode down the Namur road to confer with Blucher.

The Cross Roads, which it was the object of Wellington to hold and of Ney to wrest from him, was a position of great value to the Allied Armies, for while one of these high roads led directly to Brussels, down which Picton was at that moment marching, the other not only formed the sole line of march for the Anglo-Belgian divisions, but ran from Quatre Bras to Namur, close in rear of Blucher's position at Ligny. Wellington kept a grip of both roads for three reasons; first, that he might secure the prompt concentration of the bulk of his army; next, that he might bar the way to Brussels; thirdly, that he might maintain his communication with Blucher. The possession of the point of intersection of these important routes would have been advantageous to the French for two reasons: first, that they might strike in between the

British and Prussians, and establish themselves on the road to Brussels beyond the Cross Roads, and thus compel Wellington's divisions to concentrate upon some other point; and next, that they might be in a position to co-operate directly with Napoleon, by detaching, if required, a force down the Namur road in rear of the Prussian army.

But the order to seize Quatre Bras, forwarded, as we have seen, from Charleroi, at nine, only reached Ney between ten and eleven o'clock. It was about this time that the Count de Flahault rode into the marshal's head-quarters. Ney acted at once, and sent officers to Reille, D'Erlon, and Kellerman with orders to march, and instructions to post their divisions in accordance with the views of Napoleon, that is, at Genappe, Bauterlez, Marbais, and Quatre Bras. The Prince of Orange had made so great a display with his handful of troops, he held his forward position so firmly, Soult so strongly counselled Ney to act in masses, that the latter deferred his attack at least until Reille's divisions should have joined him at Frasne. The bravado of the Prince of Orange thus served a useful end. Soon after Napoleon's orders arrived, that despatch from Reille was brought to Ney, which recited Girard's report of the continued occupation of Fleurus. Reille had been duly informed of the nature of the despatch carried by Flahault, but he notified to Ney that, in consequence of Girard's report, he would not put the divisions of Foy and Prince Jerome in motion until he received a positive order from the marshal. Here was a new cause of delay. Thus, after waiting until half-past ten for an order to occupy Quatre Bras, when the order arrived Ney had not the means at hand wherewith to execute it. Ney ordered Reille to march at once, and sent an officer to hurry the pace of D'Erlon's corps and Kellerman's cavalry. Between eleven and one

o'clock, then, and not at "daybreak," the left wing of the French army was operating its movement of concentration; this proceeding occupied several hours, and hence the "inactivity" of Ney, so bewildering to the critics—*après coup*. The truth is, that Ney advanced as soon as the head of the column of troops placed at his disposal arrived at Frasne. Foy came in about half-past one, and at two Ney began the action of Quatre Bras, which, in its proper place, we shall describe.

§ 3. *Blucher: Sombref.*

The head-quarters of the Prussian field-marshal had been transferred to Sombref on the afternoon of the 15th. Thence he had heard the cannonade which preceded the retreat of Pirch II. from Gilly, and he may be said to have been present when Ziethen's corps retreated through Fleurus, leaving a strong force to hold that town. During the afternoon he had again surveyed the position of Ligny, long since selected by him, and at nightfall it was occupied partially by the corps of Ziethen, while Pirch I. had arrived at Mazy, a few miles from the field, and Thielemann was in front of Namur. Blucher had also kept up communication with Wellington.

The main portion of the position occupied by Blucher lies close within the angle formed by the junction of the two roads which, starting from Charleroi and Nivelles, become one at Point du Jour, and run thence to Namur, and a corresponding angle formed by the junction of an old Roman road with the chaussée from Nivelles.[1] The Nivelles and Namur road traverses the northern boundary of the position throughout its whole length. From this

[1] See Plan No. I.

road the plateau falls to the south-east, in irregular sweeps, as far as the banks of the Ligny. This rivulet rises near the point where the old Roman way intersects the Nivelles road, flows first to the south-west, then, turning sharply to the north-east, approaches once more the Nivelles road within half-a-mile of Point du Jour. Crossing the Charleroi road, it bends to the southward for about a mile, and then wanders in an easterly direction, to swell the waters of the Orneau on their way to the Sambre. Flowing through the low grounds, the Ligny receives the contributions of several tiny tributaries, especially from the western side of the plain of Fleurus, but its waters are not deep in any part, and its banks are rarely steep. The road from Nivelles, and this eccentric watercourse, thus define the Prussian position. Several villages stand on its banks and on those of its tributaries: on the north-western side of the position, Wagnelée, St. Amand le Hameau, St. Amand la Haye, and St. Amand; on the south-eastern front, Ligny and Mont Potriaux. Within the elbow the rivulet makes to the southward, Tongrines and Tongrinelle, and near its easterly course Boignée and Balâtre. St. Amand stands at the salient angle of the body of the position, the lines of which are prolonged from that angle to the north-west on one side, and to the north-east on the other. Mont Potriaux forms a re-entering angle, for here the line of defence, as we have said, trends to the south. The villages on this front are all at the foot of the gentle and undulating slope leading up to the Nivelles and Namur road. St. Amand is a considerable village on the right bank of the rivulet. It consists of cottages, homesteads, gardens, orchards, enclosures, and a church. St. Amand la Haye is a smaller village, connected with the larger at its north-western extremity. St. Amand le Hameau is a mere offshoot lying

in the plain of Fleurus, and connected with Wagnelée, a village outside the Prussian position. A good mile north of St. Amand, and on the summit of the plateau, are the village of Bry and the mill of Bussy. Descending from this high ground about Bry, towards the south-east, we find Ligny, consisting of strongly-built stone cottages thatched with straw, and standing on both banks of the stream. Farther to the northward is Sombref, a group of several villages on the Nivelles and Namur road. Looking from the mill of Bussy, the church-towers of all these villages are visible, rising out of the trees, and far away to the south the woods and roofs of Fleurus, and beyond it the vast and beautiful plain. The ground occupied by the Prussians falls gradually towards the Ligny, and from the belt of plashy meadows, through which that rivulet flows, rises again gradually towards Fleurus and Wagnée. In 1815, with the exception of a quarry here and there, save the villages and their enclosures, with occasional groups of trees near the stream, no obstacle whatever existed to embarrass the movement of troops in any direction. Broad stretches of undulating fields, bearing tall and promising crops, enclosing scattered hamlets and isolated windmills in a sea of verdure, gladdened the eye on every side. It was on these two slopes that the two armies were drawn up; it was these smiling fields and peaceful villages that were to be the scene of a conflict of almost unparalleled ferocity, between two nations who detested each other with almost unparalleled hatred.

Blucher caused Ziethen to occupy the villages from St. Amand la Haye to Ligny, and to draw up the bulk of his corps on the high ground between Bry and Ligny. It was the gradual extension of Ziethen's battalions towards the right of the Prussian position which attracted the notice of General Girard at Wagnée, and caused him to

send in that report to Gosselies, which delayed the march of Reille upon Frasne. About eleven o'clock General Pirch I., with the second corps, entered the line from his bivouac at Mazy. The four brigades of this corps were marched to the right, and formed up in masses behind the corps of Ziethen. An hour later, Thielemann, who had quitted Namur about seven, reached Point du Jour. His corps was posted, for the moment, on the two great roads, in order that it might be easily moved to the right or left. Thus, before Napoleon had reconnoitred the position from the windmill of Fleurus, Blucher, whose corps he had hoped to surprise and defeat in detail—Blucher, who he had imagined would concentrate at Namur—had actually united, on one field, three corps d'armée, or upwards of 83,000 men, that is, about 72,500 infantry, 8,150 cavalry, and 224 guns.[1]

Napoleon, in reconnoitring the Prussian position, is said to have assumed that the Prussians stood at right angles to the Namur road, and it is asserted that this view led him to devise the scheme of an attack in front, while Ney fell upon the right flank and rear. He is also reported to have inferred, from what he could see of the disposition of the Prussians, that Blucher was intent, not on fighting a stout battle where he stood, but on effecting a junction with Wellington. Hence his desire that Ney should rapidly drive off the British from Quatre Bras, and turning to his right along the Namur road, should enter the rear of the Prussian position by Marbais. But, although his right rested on no support, and although the line of front from the salient angle of St. Amand was nearly perpendicular to the Namur road, practically Blucher's army was parallel

[1] Total force of three corps of arms, 86,669. Deduct losses on 15th, 1,200, and detached infantry and cavalry, 1,500, total 2,700; whole force equal to 83,969.

to that road, completely covering it from Point du Jour to the place where it is intersected by the old Roman road.

Blucher, as we have seen, kept a keen look-out from the mill of Bussy upon the motions of the French; and as soon as he saw a decided movement of their columns towards St. Amand and Ligny, he made a fresh distribution of his troops. The whole of the villages in front were strongly occupied, guns were posted on the slopes, and supports were moved down. The stone cottages and garden walls, the churchyard and château of Ligny, had been crenellated for musketry, and were now fully manned. The orchards, the hedges, the houses of the St. Amand group were, in like manner, filled with infantry. The soldiers of Ziethen supplied these garrisons and formed the first line. The cavalry of the first corps were on the plateau nearer to Ligny. Three of the four brigades of Pirch I. were drawn up between Bry and Sombref as a second line, in columns of attack by battalions at deploying intervals, with the whole mass of their cavalry and guns in rear and on the other side of the Namur road. The fourth brigade was posted at Trois Burettes on the extreme right, and facing towards Marbais and Quatre Bras, thus commanding the old Roman road. Beyond Wagnelée four squadrons of horse and a battery also watched that flank. The centre and right appeared to be thus amply filled, and therefore Thielemann, who had remained near Sombref, was now directed to occupy the extreme left. Accordingly he posted his four brigades on the high ground between Sombref and Tongrines, across and upon the road from Fleurus to Namur. Mont Potriaux, Tongrinelle, Boignée, and Balâtre were occupied by detachments, the front being covered by a strong line of skirmishers. A body of cavalry occupied the Fleurus road behind the bridge over the Ligny, and the reserve

cavalry of the corps were held far back on the road to Namur.

The two armies in presence were pretty equally matched. Blucher, as we have stated, presented a force of nearly 84,000 men; Napoleon, including the corps of Lobau, on the march from Charleroi, had in hand about 75,000 men; but while the Prussians showed a superiority in infantry, Napoleon was superior in artillery and cavalry, having 242 guns to match against 224, and 15,000 horsemen to 8,000 in the Prussian array. The French being a little higher than the Prussian slopes, the French artillery had a better command of the Prussian, and the greater irregularities of the French side favoured the concealment of movements, and sheltered the troops from the fire of the hostile cannon.

We have now traced the course of each army throughout the morning; we have described the hesitation and incredulity of Napoleon, the activity of Blucher, the prolonged and unavoidable delay of Reille and D'Erlon, and the movements ordered by Wellington, giving rise to promises which he was not destined to fulfil. We have seen the French army form its splendid order of battle, and the Prussian host gather, formidable in numbers and positions, across its path. At the moment we have now reached, Ney's cannon are already thundering in front of Quatre Bras; it is half-past two; there are only five hours of daylight at the disposal of the two famous chiefs who are so eager to drive Wellington to Antwerp, and Blucher to Aix la Chapelle. The Morning of the 16th has thus been spent in preparing for the two battles of Ligny and Quatre Bras, which have made the Afternoon of that day so famous in military annals. To that point in this fierce and brief campaign we have now arrived.

CHAPTER VI.

AFTERNOON OF THE 16TH OF JUNE.

§ 1. *The Battle of Ligny.*

THE grand movements which carried the French brigades and divisions into position were completed soon after two o'clock. A silence of expectation pervaded the broad plains. Napoleon, from his post of observation near Fleurus, and Blucher from the heights in front of Bry, were prepared, one to give, the other to receive battle. Each army was animated with the fiercest passions. The Prussians remembered how the "Grande Nation" had humiliated their king, insulted their queen, garrisoned their fairest cities, and plundered and oppressed the whole of Germany. The French thirsted to avenge Leipsic and the occupation of Paris. Perhaps no two armies, more determined to slay without mercy, ever met. The spirit of personal vengeance nerved each combatant, not merely to master and defeat, but to master and destroy his foe. Hence this battle, though so brief, was so bloody. The war-cry on each side seemed to be the Moslem shriek —"Kill! kill!"

It is recorded that the quiet of the sultry summer noon was broken by the clang of the bell in the church tower of St. Amand striking half-past two. Three cannon shots

in quick but measured succession, fired near Fleurus, next broke the stillness—the signal for Vandamme to fall on. Vandamme immediately sent General Lefol's brigade against St. Amand. Lefol marched forward with drums beating and colours flying. The soldiers shouted "Vive l'Empereur!" and the bands played the old airs of the Revolution. Pressing on with impetuous tread these gallant soldiers were not checked by the fierce fire of the Prussian battalions, who occupied the village. They dashed into the enclosures, engaged their enemies at short range, and by the velocity of their relentless advance compelled the Prussians, after a short but vigorous resistance, to give way. Issuing in pursuit with the ardour of their nation, they were suddenly stopped by a shower of grape, before they could cross the rivulet. General Steinmetz, whose brigade defended St. Amand, rallied the expelled battalions, reinforced them, assailed the village in his turn, and, finding the force insufficient, called fresh battalions into the fight, and regained part of the village. But Vandamme, perceiving the check to his soldiers, sent Berthezène with fresh troops to aid Lefol, and threw forward Girard against Le Hameau and La Haye. Girard overcame all resistance in his path, and Berthezène, operating at the same time on Lefol's left, the Frenchmen succeeded in carrying their front of battle to the inner margin of these villages. But no farther, for the cannon assailed them when they attempted to issue forth, broke their formations, and strewed the ground with dead. The French threw themselves into the gardens, the houses, the churchyard, and a large building, called by some writers a château, which stood at the point where St. Amand joins La Haye. Vandamme brought his guns into play, and there was reason to fear that he would make a daring attempt to carry the heights.

Blucher, to prevent this, threw promptly forward effective reinforcements. The division of Pirch II. descended the slope; three brigades of cavalry, under General Jürgass, were moved down in support on the right of La Haye; and General von Tippelskirchen marched his division from Trois Burettes towards Wagnelée. Before the two latter generals came into line, Pirch II. assaulted La Haye, and, in the first onset, carried the upper part; but Girard, a valiant officer, hurried his second brigade into action, and after a desperate struggle once more recovered the village. Undismayed, Pirch II. brought up his second line, renewed the combat, but was again broken and put to flight. Still he only retired across the brook, and under cover of his cannon reformed his battalion. Blucher galloped up at this instant and roused the passions of his troops by his stimulating words. Pirch II. led them forward for the third time. General Jürgass had now come up, and his horsemen stood in the open ground between La Haye and Wagnelée. The infantry fell on with more fury than before. They broke into the village, fought hand to hand, steadily made their way from house to house, and finally forced the French back into Le Hameau, with the loss of the intrepid Girard (mortally wounded) and his two brigadiers. At the same time General Jürgass issued from Wagnelée and tried to charge the flank of Girard's soldiers; but Vandamme had again prepared for misfortune by placing Habert's brigade among the tall corn on the French left of Le Hameau. Jürgass came on without skirmishers, hastily, and confident of success, but his soldiers, unexpectedly smitten by the fire of Habert's skirmishers, who were kneeling in the corn, recoiled, and were forced back into Wagnelée. During these terrible combats in the village of La Haye, Steinmetz had been entirely occupied in preventing Lefol and Berthezène from

moving out of St. Amand. The fight had been keen and bloody along the whole north-western front; so quick and deadly that Vandamme had engaged every gun and every battalion. Yet the only solid advantage he had gained was the possession of St. Amand and Le Hameau, from neither of which he could issue. It will be observed that Blucher, to keep his ground, had actually extended his position, as well as carried three entire divisions of infantry and three brigades of cavalry to his right. The French line ran along the rear face of St. Amand, thence to Le Hameau, a little thrown back on the left flank, and into the plain beyond, where Domont stood with his horse. The Prussians had failed to retake St. Amand, but had recovered La Haye, had occupied Wagnelée, and had posted cavalry on their right to control Domont.

Three hours had passed away in this furious, well-sustained, and mortal combat. During that period the French centre had been engaged in even a bloodier and more horrible strife in and about the village of Ligny.

Gérard, ranged in beautiful order in front of Ligny, had retained the divisions of Vichery and Pecheux on that side, and had posted Hulot's division and the cavalry of the fourth corps across the Fleurus road, and at right angles to his line of battle, as a support to the masses of cavalry under Grouchy, and a counterpoise to the corps of Thielemann. He strove to capture Ligny with the divisions of Vichery and Pecheux, estimated at 10,000 men.

The action on this side began with a heavy cannonade a little before three o'clock. Gérard then formed three columns of attack, and, with music and much enthusiasm, they marched to battle in succession from right to left. The Prussians, under Jagow and Henkel, stood silently behind the walls, and hedges, and barricades, in the château, and throughout that part of the village on the

French side of the brook. They mustered for the defence, including the reserves, 9,000 men, with sixteen guns on each flank.

As the three columns came within musketry range, the Prussians opened fire, and the hail of shot struck and shook the French masses, and brought them to a momentary halt. Resuming their march, they move gallantly up towards the outer defences of the village, and engaged their adversaries at close quarters. Unable to penetrate, they gave way. Reformed, aroused by the animating words and gestures of their officers, the soldiers of Pecheux and Vichery once more started forward and renewed the combat; bounding up to the hedges and walls with fire and steel, they strove to break in.

The Prussians held their own along the whole front, and the French were forced to retire. Again they rushed forward, and again they were overpowered by the unceasing fire of their foes. The whole line was now covered by dense clouds of rolling smoke. The shells poured into Ligny by the French had set the thatch of the stone cottages in a blaze, and bright tawny tongues of flame leaped up out of the white smoke of the battle and the browner hues of the burning straw. Into the midst of this exciting atmosphere Gérard's troops came on a fourth time; the dark columns, raised to fury by three defeats, and reinforced by fresh battalions, whose restrained ardour now broke all bounds, dashed into the position of the defenders, pressed on with wild cries, and in spite of the splendid fighting of the Prussians, gained ground, and, once setting them in motion, pursued them through the enclosures and orchards, swept them out of nearly the whole of the village on the right bank, and followed them across the brook. A brilliant onset it was; but speedily General Jagow poured three fresh battalions into the village, and this compact

mass coming on with great vigour, struck and forced the most daring of the French over the rivulet, and into the very outermost houses of the village. Yet no farther. Recovering from the confusion caused by Jagow's vehement counterstroke, the French rallied, and a combat of the deadliest kind began in this confined space. None demanded, none gave quarter. Each slew the enemy where and how he could. It was a *mêlée* of gladiators doomed to conquer or die. The bayonet, the butt of the musket, the bullet, by turns inflicted death or mortal wounds. There were no survivors but the victors. And over this horrible struggle the flames played and raged, and the burning timbers of many a rooftree fell upon antagonists who, insensible to this peril, were absorbed by one passion, a desire to kill. It is a tragedy which reminds one of the last combat of the Niebelungen in the hall of King Etzel.

Into the midst of this ferocious combat Gérard now sent his last reserve. Thus ten thousand Frenchmen, in successive bodies, had been hurled into Ligny. On the other side two fresh battalions, belonging to Henkel's division, came down from the mill of Bussy; and the fight continued to rage with unabated vehemence throughout the village.

It was now about half-past five. The two armies had been in action for three hours. We may pause a moment and sum up what had been lost and won.

The Prussians had lost St. Amand, on their right; they were contending fiercely for Ligny, in the centre; on their left they had receded, before Grouchy, from Boignée and Balâtre, but had kept Tongrinelle. On this side, in the early afternoon, there was but little fighting. Practically, the French opposed only one division of infantry and two of cavalry to the whole corps of Thielemann, and the result

obtained was the maintenance of this Prussian corps in a state of comparative inactivity between Tongrines and Sombref. About five o'clock Napoleon, yielding to the demands of Vandamme, whose whole corps, plus the division of Girard, had been engaged, drew Subervie's light horse from Grouchy and sent them to aid the left, and at the same time caused the Young Guard, under Duhesme, and one battalion of the Old Guard, to advance in the same direction. He had observed the gradual accumulation of Prussians on their right; he had seen the process of weakening the centre continually going on. He supplied Vandamme with reinforcements, not only that he might hold his own and make progress, but that he might strike hard when an occasion should arrive, which Napoleon was preparing.

It has been seen how Napoleon, at first unwilling to believe that any considerable force of Prussians was before him, had at length recognized the fact that a body of troops did stand between Bry and Sombref. At two o'clock he forwarded those instructions to Ney which directed that marshal to force back his foes and turn aside to aid in crushing the venturous body of Prussians. At a quarter past three Soult sent off a fresh despatch more emphatic in its terms. The enemy is now described as occupying St. Amand and Bry. The body of troops has become "an army." Napoleon has caught this army *flagrante delicto*, at the moment when it is seeking to effect a junction with the English, and Ney is to manœuvre at once upon the heights of Bry and St. Amand, and come to close quarters with the right and rear of the enemy. If he act with sufficient vigour the enemy will be lost, and he will help to achieve a victory, perhaps decisive. In short, he is told that "the fate of France is in his hands." At the very moment when he enjoined upon Ney the execution of this

new operation—the third since the morning—Napoleon did not know, and apparently did not so much as dream, that Wellington barred the road to Brussels, and clung as tenaciously to the road from Nivelles to Namur as Blucher himself. Having sent this order at a quarter past three, and having, two hours before, reinforced Vandamme, seeing the weakness of the Prussian centre, Napoleon determined to throw his whole remaining reserve, including the corps of Lobau, which had reached Fleurus, upon the French right of the village of Ligny. By this stroke he hoped to pierce through the Prussian army, cross the Namur road, cut off Thielemann from Blucher, and, with the aid of the expected succour from Ney, capture or destroy every division fighting in the angle formed by the line from Ligny to St. Amand, and from St. Amand to Marbais. It was a grand design, and we shall see how and why it failed.

To execute this design the Guard and Milhaud's cuirassiers were put in motion. It may be remembered that the Guard stood in a dense column on the left of Fleurus; that the Young Guard, and one of the regiments of the Old Guard, had been detached in support towards the left; that thus the portion of the infantry of the Guard available for an attack on the Prussian centre consisted of fifteen battalions, or 7,000 men; and that besides these there were 1,800 horsemen under Guyot, 3,000 under Milhaud, seventy or eighty guns, and the whole corps of Lobau, now moving into position on the right of Fleurus: a mass of 18,000 foot, 4,800 horse, and at least 100 guns. The Guard took ground to the right, manœuvring ably in the rear of Gérard, and appearing, as it withdrew from its first position, to be drawing off from the field. Suddenly the Guard received orders to halt; the attack on the centre was suspended, for an officer from Vandamme rode

up to Napoleon, bearing the most alarming information. Vandamme reported that a hostile column of troops of all arms had appeared on his left, distant about three miles, and that it seemed to be making its way towards Fleurus. Was it a Prussian or an English corps, or was it the succour demanded from Marshal Ney? Napoleon was puzzled. To discover the truth an officer was sent off at a gallop, and, pending the inquiry, Napoleon halted the Guard, urged Vandamme and Gérard to maintain their ground, and supplied the latter with three batteries from the artillery of the Guard. But Blucher did not allow Napoleon's lieutenants a moment's rest. The conflict in Ligny was maintained with unabated rage. Vandamme, unable to issue from St. Amand, scarcely able to hold Le Hameau, was smitten with an unceasing fire of cannon and musketry. Jürgass, supported by a demonstration of cavalry on his right, and a sortie from La Haye on his left, dashed out of Wagnelée, and drove the French from Le Hameau, and arrayed the division of Tippelskirchen in front of that place.

It was now half-past six. The officer sent to reconnoitre the strange enemy returned and informed Napoleon that the corps was no enemy—it was the corps of D'Erlon. The Prussians had also felt this corps, and their cavalry on the extreme right had fallen back before the light horse of Jacquinot. But as suddenly as it had appeared so it vanished. Napoleon had sent no orders to the much-perplexed chief of the 1st corps; Ney, as we shall learn later, had, and his positive orders D'Erlon had obeyed. But he left behind Durutte's division of infantry, and Jacquinot's horse; yet these took no part in the fight.

The final moment was now approaching. Blucher withdrew Henkel's soldiers from Ligny, and replaced them by

part of Krafft's division; but he continued to throw more and more battalions to his right. Stung by the success of the Prussians in their last charge, Vandamme brought up the Guard, and hurled Duhesme's young soldiers upon Le Hameau, and the remains of Girard's division upon La Haye. The onset was impetuous and successful. Tippelskirchen was flung back into Wagnelée, and Pirch II. compelled to retire into La Haye. Blucher, however, determined to push the attack with his right, called up the whole of Brause's division from Trois Burettes, and with these fresh soldiers he once more shattered the French, and regained possession of Le Hameau.

Tippelskirchen's division now fell to the rear, and Brause and Pirch II. continued the battle. The brave defenders of Ligny had been reinforced, and Gérard feared that his exhausted men would be compelled to give way. Thielemann had made a weak attack down the Fleurus road, but had been repulsed with the loss of six guns; and this short combat had been followed by a general action maintained by the skirmishers from Mont Potriaux to Tongrinelle. Napoleon still withheld the signal for the advance of the Guard. It was now about half-past seven.

At this time, when Napoleon was watching for a favourable moment, Blucher ordered three fresh battalions of Langen's division to La Haye, and sent two more from the wreck of the division of Steinmetz, and the whole of Tippelskirchen's division once more into action. He designed to lead a new attack upon the French left, and he cheered on his soldiers as they, for the last time that day, fell upon the infantry of Vandamme and upon the Young Guard. It is said that Blucher at this period of the battle was about to assume the offensive, with the object of crushing Vandamme and reaching the Fleurus

road. But a far different issue was impending. For Napoleon, seeing the Prussian centre further weakened by the departure of Landen, gave the long-expected order to the Guard. Dense clouds had risen in the north-west, and behind these the sun had sunk. The murky atmosphere of the battle-field was rendered deeper and gloomier by the darkness of the evening. The Guard and the heavy horsemen, in compact array, marched along beneath the "sulphurous canopy" of Gérard's cannonade, and that of their own artillery. As they approached Ligny, the tired remains of Gérard's noble soldiers, cheered by the sight, fell on with renewed impetuosity. At length the huge dark column, in perfect array, broke through the veil of smoke, their dreaded uniform became visible, their cries were heard by the Prussians; but these brave men were not to be daunted so, and they continued the desperate combat. The Guard marched steadily on, reached, and crossed the brook, sweeping before them the skirmishers, and drawing upon themselves the fire of a reinforcement moving down the slope to Ligny. At the same time Gérard's soldiers pressed forward, Milhaud's heavy cavalry followed through the village, and a body of light horse flanked the right of the Imperial Guard. The blow struck by Napoleon was swift and deadly. Ligny was turned, and Blucher galloped up breathless from the right of his line to find the battle lost.

But although they were defeated, the Prussians were neither broken nor routed. Blucher and his lieutenants made head on every side to secure their own retreat and that of their right wing. In rapid succession the Prussian cavalry charged into the French at the outlet of the village. Lützow led the attack with his lancers, but was overthrown and taken prisoner. Blucher himself headed a mass of horsemen, in the vain hope of hurling the

French once more over the Ligny. The charge failed: Blucher's horse was shot, and, in falling, rolled upon his veteran rider. The cuirassiers of Milhaud, pursuing the retiring cavalry, swept past without seeing the rich prize who lay helplessly on the ground, attended only by Count Nostitz. Presently the French horse were in their turn forced to retire, with a body of Prussian lancers close on their heel. Nostitz called for their aid. Blucher was released, quickly lifted on a horse, and led away from the field.

Night had now fallen, and Gneisenau had taken command. There was a confused struggle on the wide slope above Ligny and below Bry and Sombref; infantry were retreating in square, in larger or smaller bodies, cavalry hurtling in the darkness against them, and against each other, amid the roar of cannon and the shouts of combatants. The French had broken into the position, but they made slow progress up the slopes. Holding Bry and Sombref, the Prussian generals secured the orderly retreat of their right, and stopped the advance against the centre. Neither Vandamme nor Napoleon could throw their enemies into confusion. There was no flight. The Prussians gave ground, but fought every yard of the way, and the French were compelled to halt before they could touch Bry, enter Sombref, or seize any part of the Namur road. They had won the battle and the battle-field; they had defeated, but had not routed, the Prussian army.

When the action ceased, about half-past nine, Vandamme stood in front of St. Amand, La Haye, and Wagnelée; Lobau, having passed to the front, occupied the ground about the mill of Bussy; Gérard rested on his right; Grouchy, with Hulot's division, was at Potriaux, and on the road; the Guard and the cuirassiers, as usual, were above Ligny in second line.

General von Gneisenau had taken the command of the Prussian army. He resolved to hold Bry until midnight; to maintain the whole of Thielemann's corps at Sombref and Point du Jour; and to withdraw the remainder of the army at one o'clock to Tilly and Gentinnes, on the road to Wavre. The execution of these measures was not hindered by any movements of the wearied French; who, after posting their pickets, sought repose upon the field, while Napoleon at once betook himself to his head-quarters at Fleurus.

The loss of the Prussians in this battle is estimated by themselves at 12,000, and by a careful French authority at 18,000,[1] including a few hundred prisoners taken in the retreat. They also lost twenty-one guns. The French loss is also the subject of controversy; the estimates of the best writers varying the figures from 7,000 to 11,000, the latter number being probably the correct one. In addition to their loss upon the field, the Prussians were deprived of the services of some 8,000 soldiers who separated and fled towards Namur. Thus Napoleon, at a cost of 11,000 men, had diminished the strength of the Allies by at least 25,000, and had compelled Blucher to cede the battle-field. But he had not gained the object for which he fought the battle —he had not separated Blucher from Wellington. When he retired to Fleurus he did not probably know that fact, and he certainly took no pains to ascertain it. For all night long the Prussians were filing away, and, as we shall see, none of his outposts knew whither, although they were within gunshot of the bivouacs of Von Jagow and Thielemann.

§ 2. *The Battle of Quatre Bras.*

From the sombre and blood-bedewed field of Ligny we

[1] Charras.

must return to narrate the fortunes of the French left wing under Marshal Ney. The events of the morning which immediately preceded the battle of Quatre Bras have been already described, and the story must be resumed at the point where Foy coming into Frasne enabled the marshal to begin the fray.

But first, we must describe in more detail, and from the British side, the scene of this conflict. It will be remembered that the road from Charleroi to Brussels ran through the position in a straight line. Viewed from the farm at Quatre Bras, this road was lost to sight in the direction of Frasne. The Namur road branched off at an acute angle, and disappeared in the direction of Thyle, beyond which the hills about Marbais, and farther to the south-east the plain of Fleurus, were visible to the spectator. On the right of the Charleroi road stood the wood of Bossu. Its straggling border fringed the road to Nivelles about 200 yards from Quatre Bras, and stretching southward at the same distance from the Charleroi road, it bent abruptly inwards, and expanding in width, extended upwards of half a mile, where it terminated in a square clump of trees, at its south-western angle, near the farm of Pierpont. Thus, between the road and the wood there was an open space, some 500 yards broad at its southern base, and narrowed to 200 yards at Quatre Bras. On the left, or eastern, side of the road lay a wider plain, bounded by the Namur road and a rivulet, rising in the wood of Bossu, and running, first to the eastward, as far as the Namur road, where it turned to the north-east. A few yards beyond this rivulet, above its right bank, and close to the Charleroi road, stood and stands the strong farmhouse of Gemioncourt, with enclosed fields stretching to the eastward along the valley, and beyond the farm the ground rises, forming a slight elevation overlooking the plain towards Quatre Bras. The village of Péraumont lies

on the left, and the wood of Delhutte bounds the view to the south-east.

The Prince of Orange, with a weak force of less than 7,000 men and sixteen guns, but *no* cavalry, occupied the front of the position we have described, facing towards Frasne, and extending from the wood of Delhutte on his left, across the road, to the wood of Bossu, with his guns on the high road, and his reserves at Quatre Bras. In this position he had remained for several hours, but the moment of action was fast approaching; for the arrival of Foy, about half-past one, increased Ney's force to 9,000 infantry, 1,865 cavalry, and twenty-two guns. These he arrayed, at once, in order of battle, and gave them the word to advance. He risked nothing in so doing; because, already superior in every arm, he knew that Prince Jerome was not far off; that his division would increase the total strength of the attacking force by nearly 8,000 men; and that Jerome would be followed by Kellerman and D'Erlon.

The first indication of the coming action was given by the French skirmishers, who expelled the Dutch from the wood of Delhutte, and drove back their advanced posts along the whole front. About two o'clock Ney made a vigorous forward movement. Bachelu carried Péraumont on the right, Piré charged and overthrew a battalion, Foy drove the Dutch back upon Gemioncourt, and Ney established his batteries on the ridge above that farm. But here the Prince of Orange halted, holding the farm and enclosures, thus barring the road to Quatre Bras, and filling the wood of Bossu with troops. Nor, although Prince Jerome had come into line, and his leading columns were breaking into the farm and wood of Pierpont, was the Prince of Orange without hope. Sometimes wanting in judgment, never wanting in courage, and inspired by the spectacle of red regiments moving out from Quatre Bras,

he became too audacious, and led the battalion defending Gemioncourt against the veterans of Foy. The result might have been foreseen. Broken by cannon-shot, this battalion fell back in confusion, and Foy, seizing the opportunity, charged and carried the farm and enclosures, thus bringing the French front on to the verge of the open country south of Quatre Bras, which it seemed so easy to reach. But the moment when conquest was possible had passed away.

The red masses which cheered the heart of the Prince of Orange as he looked across the rich cornfields were the regiments of Picton's division, which had marched that morning from Brussels across the Field of Waterloo to Quatre Bras. With them came two batteries of artillery, and on the Nivelles road the head of Van Merle's column of Dutch-Belgian cavalry was seen wheeling to its right and forming on the east of the wood of Bossu. Picton's division drew up speedily along the Namur road, and the 1st battalion of the 95th Rifles, under Sir Andrew Barnard, rapidly engaged the French skirmishers on the extreme left, and compelled them to retire towards Péraumont. Van Merle, hastily called up by the Prince of Orange to support the infantry retiring from Gemioncourt, was charged by Piré, who overthrew both foot and horse, and disabled half a battery of guns, but did not venture to dash against the British infantry about Quatre Bras. This was the first crisis in the engagement; the arrival of Picton had saved the position. Close behind him came a portion of the Duke of Brunswick's corps, 4,000 infantry and 900 horsemen, but without guns. Part of the cavalry were sent to watch the open country and field roads on the right of the wood of Bossu; one battalion was sent to the left, and took post in rear of the 95th Rifles; two battalions were posted immediately on the right of the hamlet, and the remainder were arrayed in advance of Quatre Bras between

the wood and the main road. Although Ney had received no reinforcements, he was still superior to his adversary, for his less numerous troops were all good, and he mustered five batteries to Wellington's four.

At this moment Ney occupied a front stretching nearly east and west. On his right, the eastern flank, the French skirmishers were on the Namur road, in action with the 95th, and their line extended from that point westward on the British side of Gemioncourt into and across the southern base of the wood of Bossu. Bachelu's columns were in rear on the right, Foy in the centre, and Prince Jerome on the left. The guns of the whole of Reille's corps were disposed along the ridge in heavy batteries at intervals from right to left. Wellington's line was not parallel to that of the French, but followed the direction of the Namur road, which, taking a south-easterly course, touched the French right. The British right was in the wood of Bossu, defended by Perponcher's division, protected on their left by the Brunswick regiments in the open. Thus the British left and centre were exposed to an incessant cannonade from Reille's guns, inadequately answered by the inferior artillery of the Allies; and the Dutch-Belgians and Nassauers in the wood were giving ground before the onsets of Jerome.

Ney was about to issue from his position and assault the British left and centre. The French light troops dashed forward from the valley of Gemioncourt, and Bachelu on the right, and Foy partly on the road and partly between the road and the wood, led forward their heavy columns, protected by the guns and followed by Piré's horsemen. The signs of the coming storm did not escape the watchfulness of the British commander. He resolved not to wait, but to meet it. Picton's skirmishers were already deeply engaged, and before the French columns had crossed the little ravine and broken through the hedges, Picton's two

brigades had moved steadily forward into the deep corn, showing broad red masses in a setting of bright green. Kempt led the left and Pack the right. As they swept over the field, the light troops, overpowered by their opponents, fell back fighting, and joined their battalions. Picton rode along his line, according to his wont, and shouts broke from soldiers who were proud of their gallant leader. Disordered in passing through the fences of Gemioncourt, broken into small columns of attack, the French were received by a telling fire at short range. As eager for the fray as their ancient foes, they sent back a destructive fire. But Picton was not the man to allow them to recover from the partial confusion in which they had reached the open. His fire had ravaged their columns—their fire decreased in vigour. Suddenly the welcome command to charge was heard, and with levelled muskets, close ranks, and steady tramp the red masses went forward and literally swept the field clear of their foes, following them up to the fences of Gemioncourt, and pouring into them a heavy fire as they crossed the ravine. The left regiment of Kempt's brigade, the 79th, in the ardour of battle, rushed through the hedges, and dashed up the opposite slope; but they paid for their undue zeal. A flank fire from a French regiment in reserve, and a charge of cavalry, sent them flying back. During this bloody encounter between Picton and Bachelu, Foy had fallen upon the Duke of Brunswick, who up to this moment had gallantly sustained a fierce cannonade to which he could not reply. Like Seidlitz, he rode up and down the front of his line coolly smoking a pipe, a very gallant figure set in the front of the battle. Wellington, at his request, had sent him four guns, which the French speedily overthrew. Foy made his attack at the moment when Picton was advancing to encounter Bachelu. He came down in column along the skirt of the wood, supported by Piré's

cavalry on his right flank, and his front covered by a swarm of light troops. The Duke of Brunswick immediately led forward his lancers, but Foy's veterans, undismayed, received them with a steady fire, and the young soldiers went about and fled. The French horse now came on at a gallop; the Brunswick infantry, fearful of the shock, followed their cavalry, steadily at first, but soon fell into utter disorder, some rushing to the wood, and others fleeing to Quatre Bras. Their undaunted duke strove in vain to keep them in masses, and while engaged in this noble work he received a mortal wound. The Brunswick hussars, made of better stuff, charged into the French column, and fought awhile, hand to hand, but were in turn overpowered, and the French, spurring on, mastered for a moment the whole of this part of the field.

Picton's brigades had just returned from their triumphant charge, and had taken post in a slight depression of the plateau, the 42nd Highlanders and the 44th Regiment being in line next to the road. The violence of the French cavalry charge down the road had carried these bold horsemen beyond the right flank of Pack's brigade. Seeing two infantry regiments, in line, the French lancers wheeled to their right, and came thundering down upon the British rear. The 42nd were not quick enough in forming square, and the lancers dashed into their midst by the open rear face. The flank companies were cut to pieces as they ran in, but the gallant Frenchmen did not succeed in breaking the square; for the Scotchmen would not stir, and falling furiously upon those who had got among them, killed them with ball or bayonet, or made them yield their arms. But the French killed Sir Robert Macara, and wounded Lieutenant-Colonel Dick and Major Davidson. That a half-formed square should yet resist cavalry, shows the training and mettle of the men. The 44th did more; they

resisted in line. Hearing the rush of horsemen through the corn, Colonel Hammerton did not attempt to form square. He simply made the rear rank face about, and in this position they delivered, at his command, so steady a fire that the lancers were driven off, galled in their flight by the men of the front rank; perhaps the most brilliant exploit among the exploits of that day.

The head of the cavalry column from which the lancers had detached themselves pursued the Brunswick hussars up to Quatre Bras; and Wellington, involved in the flying column, saved himself by leaping his horse over the 92nd Highlanders who lined the ditch of the Namur road. The main body of the French, staggered and repelled by the fire of the 92nd, retired in good order, but a score galloped into the village, and one officer, coming into the rear, made a dash at Wellington. The daring Frenchman was wounded and taken prisoner, and but few of the horsemen who entered the village returned to their comrades.

Both generals were fighting an uphill game. Wellington knew that if he could hold his own for an hour he would be reinforced from Nivelles and from Brussels. Ney believed that he could establish his troops in such a position that when the first corps, under D'Erlon, came up he would be able to overthrow his enemy. Both fought at a disadvantage. Wellington was inferior in artillery, and Ney had not only more cavalry, but cavalry who, although they could not shake the British infantry, were able to keep even them in play, and ride over or through any horsemen Wellington could send against them. But Ney's infantry had never recovered the shock of Picton's scathing charge. Bachelu's division did not advance again with any spirit, and Foy's men did not seem anxious to come into collision with the British. Wellington fought all day with his best arm, the infantry; Ney had to rely upon his

guns and his horsemen. Jerome's troops, indeed, had made great progress in the wood of Bossu, and they were masters of nearly its whole length; but they were not able to debouch, because Wellington's troops held the north-eastern angle where the wood approached the village of Quatre Bras.

Ney's next effort was with his cavalry. Kellerman had brought up his corps in front of Frasne, and one division, L'Heritier's, stood close in rear of Gemioncourt; but Ney used them sparingly, in obedience to the instructions of Napoleon, and he made no use of the light cavalry of the Guard, under Lefebre Desnouettes. Yet as he had been ordered to take Quatre Bras, and move a large force to his right upon Marbais, it was plain that he could not effect this with his shaken infantry and light horsemen. He therefore combined a portion of L'Heritier's second brigade, cuirassiers, with Piré's light horse, and sent them headlong against the British. At this time the two regiments of Pack's brigade, the 42nd and 44th, stood in line on the open rye-fields, having the road on their right; and in their left rear, but farther removed, was his other regiment, 1st Royals, and the 28th, 32nd, and 79th, under Kempt. The French batteries played upon them incessantly in the intervals between the closer attacks, and the firing now was the prelude to the most formidable they had yet sustained. Suddenly the skirmishers ran in; hastily the regiments formed into squares; the fire of the batteries ceased, and in a moment the cavalry were upon them. In debouching from the French position the French horsemen passed between Gemioncourt and the wood; Piré turned to his right and rode at the British infantry; the cuirassiers swept rapidly along the chaussée. Pack's two battalion squares were assaulted in vain by squadrons in succession; but Picton, wishing to give them

direct support, formed the 28th and Royals into one column, and led them straight at the French horse.[1] The column shouted as it trampled down the rye, and the enemy, amazed at the daring of this manœuvre, prepared to strike at those audacious foot soldiers. But Picton, who led the column, pressed on until he had gained his point; that is, had planted his force where his fire would support that of Pack. Then he halted and formed square, and the cavalry charged only to meet death and defeat. The movement begun by Picton was followed by the 32nd and 79th; so that the British infantry, arrayed in squares, and still maintaining a position midway between Quatre Bras and Gemioncourt, stretched over the fields from the Charleroi to the Namur road; having behind them Best's brigade of Hanoverians, who occupied the road itself. Picton's squares looked like rocks in a flowing tide; for the cavalry only dashed up to them to be broken and flung off. During this strange contest, the cuirassiers, who had passed along the road toward Quatre Bras, had easily disposed of the Belgian cavalry, and galloping on, met the volleys of the 92nd, before which they recoiled, and the whole host of horsemen, like a flight of pigeons, went hurriedly to the rear. But not for long. Hardly had skirmishers been thrown out to keep down the galling fire from the enemy in front of the hedges of Gemioncourt, than the French cavalry came dashing back, and the wild combat was renewed. Nor without reason. Ney had nothing wherewith to fight, except his horsemen, and at this moment the issue of the day depended entirely upon the steadfastness of the British squares. The toughness of the British infantry was never so severely tested, except two days afterwards at Waterloo; but had the

[1] See Plan II.

squares been part of the solid earth they could not have proved more immovable. Yet their loss had been enormous, and their ammunition was nearly spent, when the French, exhausted and frustrated, once more withdrew.

But there was no respite for the squares; for the French horse had no sooner ridden off than the batteries on the heights opened fire, and dealt heavy blows at the squares, which they could not return. Their fortitude was tried, but the long-expected help from trusty comrades was near at hand.

Two Brunswick battalions had been moved on to the right of Picton, and filled up the space between the road and the wood; but in the wood itself Prince Jerome seemed about to triumph and debouch upon the Nivelles road; and from Péraumont, Bachelu, though roughly handled, continued to send swarms of light troops to contend with the 95th. Ney now learned, and it was a grievous blow, that an aide-de-camp of Napoleon had turned D'Erlon's corps towards the field of Ligny. The Imperial aide-de-camp was followed by General d'Elcambre, D'Erlon's chief of the staff, and Ney, unwilling to retire, or lose a chance, sent D'Elcambre back with peremptory orders for the immediate return of the 1st corps. Having done this, he renewed the battle with more fierceness than ever.

It was time. Alten's division, coming from Soignies, was now visible down the Nivelles road. Before Ney could renew the attack, Alten had brought his men into line. His force consisted of four British regiments, forming the 5th British brigade, led by Sir Colin Halkett, and six Hanoverian battalions, led by Count Kielmansegge. With them came Lloyd's and Cleeve's batteries of foot artillery, and close in their rear was Kuhlmann's horse battery of the German Legion attached to the 1st division.

Wellington directed the Hanoverians along the Namur road, and Kielmansegge drew them up on the left of Best and in the rear of Picton. Halkett's infantry were sent to the front and posted between the wood of Bossu and the road, as a reserve to the Brunswick battalions, who had re-formed after their overthrow by the cuirassiers. Lloyd's battery went with the British infantry, Cleeve's halted on the British left of the Charleroi road, and Kuhlmann's guns were on the road itself at Quatre Bras. As soon as he spied Halkett's red-coats in his right rear, Sir Denis Pack begged that officer to place a battalion on his right, to support the 42nd and 44th, now united in one square. Halkett placed the 69th under the orders of Pack, and its commander, Colonel Morice, deployed his battalion in a slight hollow running perpendicular to the road. Halkett rode to the front, and soon galloped back. Warning the 69th to form square, to resist an onset of cavalry, he passed on to the other regiments of his brigade, delivering the same command.

During the period thus occupied the French guns had never ceased to batter the squares. Ney's plan was to break the centre by a combined attack with horse and foot. For this purpose he had called up Kellerman, telling him that "the fate of France was in his hands," and that he must break through the mass of infantry. Kellerman arrayed 800 cuirassiers, and placed himself at their head; Foy was ready to follow in two columns; Bachelu spurred forward his light troops on the French right, and Guilleminot imparted fresh stimulus to his battalions in the wood. Suddenly Pack's skirmishers ran in, at full speed. There was a great movement and a gleam of mail through the smoke of the battle on the west of Gemioncourt. Colonel Morice, obeying Halkett's warning, was moving his battalion into square, when the Prince of Orange

heedlessly stopped the movement, although he was told of Halkett's timely information. The muffled thunder of hoofs was heard among the corn, and in a moment a body of cuirassiers, wheeling to the left, took the 69th in flank, rode over and sabred the men, and captured one of the colours, a sacrifice of gallant soldiers due solely to the meddling of the Prince of Orange, whom we shall meet again presiding over the slaughter of Ompteda and his German legionaries on the field of Waterloo. Even here, indeed, the 30th Foot barely escaped the fate of the 69th. Colonel Hamilton, disregarding the Prince, threw his battalions, skilfully and quickly, into square. The vanquishers of the 69th, repelled by the 30th, dashed across the road and joined Piré, who was once more hurtling against Picton's invincible infantry.

The battle now raged over the whole position. The flanks of Wellington were beset by Jerome and Bachelu with fresh vivacity; but while the former made headway in the wood of Bossu, Bachelu was driven back by Barnard's riflemen and Kielmansegge's Hanoverians. Foy had followed Kellerman, and Ney had sent two batteries into the wood to open fire on the flank of Halkett's brigade.

Kellerman's charge was intended to be driven home, and it was; but the British infantry did not share the fate of Zach's Hungarians at Marengo. Halkett's brigade was prepared, met the storm with serried ranks, and compelled the cuirassiers to diverge to the right, and charge forward on Quatre Bras itself. Kellerman, undismayed, spurred forward, and his shining squadrons shook the ground as they went steadily up the road after their daring leader, and struck into the very heart of the position. But Wellington had prepared a counterstroke. He had posted two guns of Kuhlmann's battery bearing directly down the road; having no cavalry, he fought cavalry with artillery;

and he prevailed. The fire of the guns smote the head of the column, the musketry of the infantry galled its flanks; horses and men commingled writhed on the chaussée in horrible confusion; Kellerman himself dismounted, retired on foot between two cuirassiers, and the whole mass, hurled backward, turned and fled. Piré's horse, seeing these chosen squadrons in full flight, once more quitted Picton's infantry, whom they had so many times failed to subdue. They charged no more upon that field.

When Kellerman retreated, Foy halted his columns; and for a brief space Ney continued the action with his artillery. The two batteries in the wood here proved serviceable. While the Brunswickers were skirmishing with the French advance on the fringe of the wood, the two batteries opened upon Halkett's brigade. Shattered by the fire, the 33rd deployed; but, misled by a false alarm of cavalry, they rushed pell mell into the wood. The experiment of deploying the other battalions was not attempted, and the whole took shelter under the clump of trees to avoid the fire, while Lloyd brought up his battery, and, though himself severely handled, having two guns disabled, yet he silenced the French batteries; then, being unsupported, he withdrew. Foy, having now no enemies in front, broke out of the wood in two columns, and occupying an isolated house abutting on the Charleroi road, three hundred yards from Quatre Bras, and one hundred and fifty from the wood, prepared to assail the centre. This was a daring movement, but not unwarranted, for Prince Bernhard had withdrawn his troops towards Hautain le Val, and Prince Jerome was now within a few yards of the Nivelles road; Picton and Kielmansegge were practically turned, and Alten was between Foy and Prince Jerome. Yet the success of the French was more apparent than real, except in the wood of Bossu, for their cavalry had lost its auda-

city, and their artillery was now engaged on nearly equal terms. And when Foy gallantly thrust his first column towards Quatre Bras, he was met and foiled; for Major-General Barnes rode up to the Highlanders, and shouting, "92nd, follow me!" led forward this regiment at the charge. The French fell back into the house and enclosures, and opened fire; but the Highlanders, receiving the shock without flinching, and pressing on, drove the column out at the point of the bayonet, followed it, replied to the fire of the second column with cold steel, and drove both into the wood. But losing their Colonel, Cameron, exposed to a heavy cannonade, and threatened by the French cavalry, which had ridden up to support Foy, they too went swiftly into the wood to reform. This was the last offensive movement attempted by Ney.

The sun was declining behind the woods, and the battle was drawing to a close. Wellington grew stronger, Ney weaker every moment. Two Brunswick battalions and sixteen guns came in from Brussels. The 1st division, the Guards, under Major-General Cooke, were known to be at hand. They came up the road from Nivelles, and arrived just as Prince Jerome's men were preparing to issue from the wood; and their timely arrival enabled Wellington to start up from the defensive and strike. He sent the Guards at once into the wood. The light companies of Maitland's brigade, under Lord Saltoun, cheering as they went, led the way at the double, and their comrades joined in the fray as fast as they arrived abreast of the wood. Going straight at the enemy, for a moment the skirmishers fired in each other's faces, but, as the Guards continued to advance, and did not halt to dodge and fire, the French were astonished and soon overpowered. The sound of the rapid musketry spreading perceptibly deeper and deeper into the wood, the loud shouts, the arrival of two batteries

of the 1st division in the general line, and the appearance of the light companies of Byng's brigade on the eastern side of the wood, told the long-tried British infantry that their ordeal was over. Halkett emerged from the wood, and formed line; Picton's wasted infantry moved forward in echelon; Kielmansegge, well covered by skirmishers, steadily made way towards Péraumont, out-flanking the French right; and thus the British line pressed back the enemy, until the skirmishers alone held the enclosures about Gemioncourt. The Guards, who had so swiftly cleared the wood, now appeared outside its southern extremity, and the men formed up as they jumped across the ditch into the fields. Ney was retiring in splendid order with a line of skirmishers well supported, and Roussel's division of Kellerman's corps ready to charge, if an opportunity presented itself. The sudden apparition of the hastily-formed line of the Guards seemed to present that opportunity, but the Guards perceiving the danger, and knowing that they could not form square, spontaneously faced about and ran into the ditch, but no farther—a spontaneous movement, admirably executed, which told well for their training. The fire from the squares of the Brunswick battalions on the left, and from the Guards in the ditch, soon beat back the cavalry. This incident serves to show how impossible it is, without the support and protection of horsemen, to pursue even a defeated foe who is stronger in that arm. This well-aimed but bootless charge was the last effort made by Ney. The Allies swept onward with loud shouts; the battle was won; and in the twilight of a summer's evening victors and vanquished took up their positions for the night, Ney on his old ground in front of Frasne, and Wellington at Gemioncourt, Péraumont, and the southern block of the wood of Bossu; both covered by strong pickets, under

whose watchful eyes the exhausted armies lay down to rest.

Both armies had suffered severely. The Allies, inferior in cavalry and artillery, and attacked in detail, had lost 4,659 men in killed, wounded, and missing, of whom 2,480 were English. The brunt of the battle had, for several hours, been borne by Pack and Kempt, and the brigades commanded by these two gallant officers were diminished by 1,569, out of 5,063 men engaged. The three Highland regiments contributed 878 to this heavy total; but it must be remembered that the 79th rashly pursued Bachelu beyond the Valley of Gemioncourt; that the 42nd was surprised before it could form into square; and that the 92nd not only received the fire of Foy's columns, which it so splendidly defeated with the bayonet, but was exposed, in passing from the isolated house to the wood, to the fire of the French batteries. Halkett's four regiments lost 368 out of 2,618. Two regiments lost heavily; the 69th, because the Prince of Orange exposed it to a charge of cavalry; the 33rd, because, when standing in column, it was taken in flank by Ney's batteries concealed in the wood of Bossu. The total loss of these two regiments was 266 men. The Guards did not win the wood of Bossu without paying the penalty of intrepidity. Their total loss was 554, of whom all, except seven, belonged to the 2nd and 3rd battalions of the 1st Regiment.

The loss of the French is fixed by the best authorities at 4,375 men; a larger loss in proportion to their strength than that which fell upon the Allies—Ney losing about one-fourth, Wellington one-seventh of the force actually in the field.

§ 3. *D'Erlon's Wanderings.*

When the battle was completely at an end, Count d'Erlon, followed by the head of the 1st corps, reached Frasne for the second time; and as his troops came up during the night, he posted them in rear of that village. The extraordinary movements of this large body of men, more than 20,000 strong, form one of the most remarkable and perplexing incidents in the campaign.

Obedient to the orders issued by Ney between ten and eleven, D'Erlon, then at Gosselies and Jumet, collected his corps about noon, and put them in motion for Quatre Bras. When they had started, he rode off in advance towards the sound of the combat. Arrived at the entrance to Frasne, he fell in with the officers of the light cavalry of the Guard; and while he was conversing with them, an aide-de-camp from Fleurus rode up, Laurent or Labédoyère, it is uncertain which, and as D'Erlon himself states, showed him a note in pencil, which he carried to Marshal Ney, ordering the marshal to direct the 1st corps upon Ligny. The aide-de-camp stated that, having fallen in with the 1st corps, he had himself already given the order for this movement, by changing the direction of the head of the column. D'Erlon rode back to rejoin his command, and sent General d'Elcambre, his chief of the staff, to communicate with Ney. The aide-de-camp went on to Gemioncourt, and delivered his message to the marshal just before General d'Elcambre arrived. The text of this message seems to have been lost. It appears nowhere; its purport alone is stated in the various narratives of the proceedings of this day. May we not conjecture that it was one of the despatches addressed by Soult to Ney at two, and a little after three o'clock? If it were a positive order from Napoleon, would Ney have ventured to disobey it, as he did, by sending

General d'Elcambre from the field of Quatre Bras, with a peremptory command for the immediate countermarch of the 1st corps? Certainly not. Whereas, if the aide-de-camp brought either the despatch written at two, or that dated a quarter past three o'clock, it would be natural that Ney, seeing that it directed him to defeat the British and then fall upon the Prussians, should endeavour to repair what he would consider the error of the aide-de-camp, and recall the 1st corps. The official account, written on the 20th at Laon, actually says that "Ney expected the 1st corps, which did not arrive until night;" and gives that as a reason why the marshal confined his efforts to the maintenance of his position at Frasne.

D'Erlon, as we have seen, actually arrived close on to the field of Ligny, halted for a short time, and then, leaving Durutte's division of infantry and Jacquinot's brigade of horse on the right flank of the Prussians, led the bulk of his corps back to Frasne in obedience to Ney's order. Hence he was as totally useless, either to Ney or Napoleon, as if he had remained at Jumet. "Twenty thousand men and forty-six guns," says an able French author, "had been led about, from mid-day until nine in the evening, between two battle-fields, distant six miles from each other, without taking part in either." Their timely presence at Quatre Bras would have placed Wellington in an extremity of peril, while their action on the right flank of the Prussians would have destroyed Blucher. So reason the military critics; but while we may know what has been, speculations on what would or might have been, had something happened which did not happen, are seldom among the fruitful pages of history. Nevertheless the cause of D'Erlon's movement is a fair subject of inquiry; for undoubtedly, his promenade from Jumet to Villers Peruin, and from Villers Peruin to Quatre Bras, was a misfortune

for the French and a piece of good luck for the Allies. Therefore we may look a little closer into the facts.

Napoleon denies that he sent any order to the 1st corps, and Colonel Charras, accepting this denial, arrives at the conclusion that some staff officer, carried away by "zeal," gave the order himself. But how can this explanation be reconciled with the statement of Soult, in his despatch from Fleurus, dated June 17—overlooked by Charras because, perhaps, it is not to be found in the mutilated copy printed in the appendix to the ninth volume of the Memoirs of St. Helena? In that despatch Soult specifically says—"If Count d'Erlon had executed the movement upon St. Amand which the Emperor *had ordered*, the Prussian army would have been totally destroyed, and we should have taken, perhaps, 30,000 prisoners." Does this phrase, "had ordered," refer to the scheme devised and set forth in the two despatches written after two o'clock on the 16th, or to some specific order from the Emperor, that, for instance, which D'Erlon says he saw in the hands of the aide-de-camp? Not the latter, for in that case why, when he was on the spot, did not D'Erlon continue to obey Napoleon and complete the movement, instead of obeying Ney? The fair inference from Soult's despatch is that he thought D'Erlon had arrived expressly to fulfil that part in Napoleon's general scheme set forth in the afternoon despatches from Fleurus addressed to Ney, and not that D'Erlon was there in consequence of a specific order from Napoleon.

In this uncertainty conjecture is free, and we may presume the truth to be this: Napoleon, as is proved by every despatch to Ney, held Wellington too cheap. The French chief believed he had "surprised" the English general in his cantonments; he estimated that a march and a skirmish would give Ney possession of Quatre Bras; and find-

ing the Prussians in his own front more numerous than he expected, Napoleon sent the formal orders through Soult for Ney to fall upon the Prussian right as soon as he had beaten Wellington. If it were to be admitted that Laurent or Labédoyère, who carried the first despatch, meeting or overtaking the 1st corps *en route* to Frasne, took upon himself, as the best interpreter of Napoleon's order, to direct it at once upon St. Amand, all the statements are reconciled. For, on that supposition, D'Erlon would have marched in obedience to what he believed to be a direct order from Napoleon. Hearing that the 1st corps had arrived, although in a quarter where it was unlooked for, Napoleon would have inferred from its presence on the field, that Ney had been successful without it, and would hastily conclude that D'Erlon would act forthwith on the Prussian right. Ney, having Soult's actual words, would be surprised at the conduct of the staff officer, and putting the true construction on the written order, would see the error committed by that officer and endeavour instantly to repair it by recalling the first corps. D'Erlon, receiving no orders from the aide-de-camp sent by Napoleon to communicate with him on the field, would naturally obey the mandate of Ney, his immediate superior, retrace his steps, and hasten back to Frasne.[1]

In this conjectural explanation Ney is exonerated from the blame Napoleon showers upon him, and D'Erlon appears in the light of a weak man overcome by a sense of responsibility, and attracted hither and thither by the influence of his two superiors. Napoleon, even in the

[1] Prince Edouard de la Tour d'Auvergne, whose object in writing an account of the Campaign is to answer Charras and Quinet, and excuse while he exalts Napoleon, has put forward the most fantastic theory on this subject, for the purpose of throwing all the blame upon D'Erlon. It is an ingenious attempt, but will not bear a close examination.

opinion of Jomini, his admirer, is held to have committed a "manifest fault," in neglecting to send a positive order to D'Erlon—who, "by the happy error of an aide-de-camp," had arrived so opportunely—to march at once upon Bry. But the primary error at the bottom of all was that earlier one committed by Napoleon, when he formed such a contemptuous estimate of the activity and resources of Wellington.

CHAPTER VII.

THE RETREAT OF THE 17TH OF JUNE.

§ 1. *Wellington's Activity.*

THE silence of the night of the 16th at Quatre Bras was only broken by the tramp of the British cavalry, as they rode into the rear of the position by the Nivelles road. Wellington slept at Genappe, where he had his head-quarters, and at daybreak on the 17th he rose and galloped off to Quatre Bras. After inspecting the outposts he took instant measures to ascertain the exact line of retreat of the Prussians, whose defeat, but not the extent of whose defeat, had been communicated to him during the preceding night, and also to find out the intentions of the French Emperor.

Napoleon, at the close of the battle of Ligny, had retired to Fleurus. As we have described already, he made no pursuit whatever, but left his army to bivouac on the ground it had so dearly won. Here, amid the heaps of killed and wounded, the hardy warriors of France reposed, and when the day dawned the Prussian army had disappeared, no Frenchman knew exactly whither. The rear-guards of Ziethen were, indeed, still close at hand, and Thielemann's lengthened column had only just filed off upon the cross-road leading to Gembloux; but, excepting a few horsemen here and there, and the dead and wounded

on the ground, nothing was seen of the Prussian army. The Prussians were far on the road to Wavre before the French battalions were astir, and, ere Napoleon made any movement, the whole of the Prussian army, except the rear half of Thielemann's corps, was united at Wavre. Within an hour of daybreak Captain Charles Wood, who had patrolled along the Namur road, reported to the Duke the retreat of the Prussians, and Colonel Gordon, with Grey's troop of the 10th Hussars, during the night, communicated with General Ziethen, then on his way to Wavre. At this time not a single French patrol had crossed the Namur road; a proof in itself, if any were needed, of the limited success of Napoleon's action on the 16th. In fact, on the evening of that day he held, in relation to Blucher, a position similar to that Wellington held in relation to Ney—he occupied the field of battle; and on the morning of the 17th the difference was this,—Blucher had retreated in the night, whereas Ney remained close to the battle-field, and Wellington held the ground he had won from his adversary. But while in the morning Napoleon thought of devoting the day to the refreshment of his army, at an early hour Wellington, amply instructed of the movements of the Prussians, and in direct communication with them, had resolved to retreat upon Mont St. Jean. The reason for these different determinations was, that Napoleon, as he had done throughout the campaign, acted upon conjecture, while his rival would not move a corporal's guard until he had certain information. We shall see that Napoleon spent the morning in doubt and hesitation; and that his inactivity was caused by the astonishing ignorance in which he allowed himself to conduct his affairs. He persistently violated his own maxim, that war is not a conjectural art.

§ 2. *Napoleon at Fleurus and Ligny.*

Napoleon was still at Fleurus at eight o'clock on the 17th. No general reconnaissance along the front had been ordered; but a division of cavalry, and one of infantry, with a brigade of dragoons in support, the whole commanded by Pajol, had been sent down the main road towards Namur, because, apparently, it had been "conjectured" that the Prussians would retire to Liége. The conjecture was confirmed into belief when Napoleon learned that Pajol had captured a Prussian battery near Mazy. About the same time, Count Flahault rejoined Napoleon from Ney's head-quarters at Frasne, and related the issue of the fight at Quatre Bras, the first intelligence of that battle which the French Emperor had received. Yet eleven hours had elapsed since the last gun was fired, and Frasne is only nine miles from Fleurus. Colonel Charras justly remarks that the carelessness is equal on both sides; for Ney had not been informed of the issue of the battle of Ligny, and he only obtained the information from a despatch which Napoleon then directed Soult to transmit to Frasne.

In this despatch Napoleon describes the defeat of the Prussians as a rout, and states that Pajol was pursuing them on the road to Namur and Liége. That being so, it was impossible that Wellington could act in Ney's front. If, however, he did, the Emperor, marching along the main road, would fall upon Wellington's left rear, while Ney assailed him in front. Napoleon then formally orders Ney to take up the position of Quatre Bras, "if only occupied by a rear-guard;" if otherwise occupied, Ney was to give the Emperor instant and detailed information, so that he might act. Ney is informed that "the whole day would be required to terminate this operation, complete the

munitions, rally the stragglers, and call in detachments" —a passage which shows that, at eight o'clock on the morning of the 17th, Napoleon did not contemplate any movement in advance. Jomini is of opinion that the delay of Napoleon on the 17th was a greater fault than his delay on the 16th.

After dictating this despatch, Napoleon drove to St. Amand, and there mounted his horse. He rode through the village pathways, still encumbered with dead and dying, and, according to his wont, he talked to the soldiers, and directed attention to some whose wounds had not yet been dressed. Thence he ascended the plateau and reviewed the troops who fell in, without arms, in succession, and offered the incense of vivas to their living idol. It is probable that, while here, the cavalry outposts, whose watch had been disturbed by Gordon's patrol, gave in their report, for about ten o'clock Napoleon ordered Count Lobau to march his corps upon Marbais, Domont and Subervie leading the way with their light horse, and an hour afterwards the Imperial Guard and Milhaud's cuirassiers were directed to follow Lobau. Napoleon continued on the field of Ligny talking politics with Grouchy and Vandamme, until Lobau sent word from Marbais that Wellington was still at Quatre Bras. This information, although not strictly correct, for the Anglo-allied infantry was already retiring upon Waterloo, roused Napoleon and forced him to decide. Another order was despatched to Ney, dated noon, directing him to drive the enemy from Quatre Bras, and telling him that he would be seconded by a flank attack from the troops at Marbais, whither the Emperor was about to proceed. At the same time Napoleon gave Grouchy 33,319 men and 96 guns, instructing him to pursue and not lose sight of the Prussians, who, it will be remembered, had already vanished, while he kept under his own command, including Ney's

troops, a force of 72,447 men and 240 guns,[1] Girard, with 2,397 men and eight guns, being left at St. Amand. Napoleon had determined to pursue and fight with Wellington, leaving Grouchy to deal with Blucher; but he still proceeded on assumptions, for he assumed that Blucher was totally defeated, and had retired to Liége, and that he might count upon fighting with Wellington alone. Napoleon, as we may infer, rode off towards Marbais about one, but Grouchy did not commence his wandering march until two o'clock. One-half the day had been wasted, and when the Emperor and the marshal started in pursuit, their foes had passed beyond reach.

§ 3. *Retreat and Pursuit.*

Wellington, as we have seen, had, from the break of day, kept strict watch upon the movements of his allies and his enemies. His own patrols brought him early intelligence of the retreat of the Prussians and the inactivity of Napoleon. He saw for himself, with wonder, the quietude of Marshal Ney. An officer from Blucher confirmed the information acquired by Colonel Gordon, and having these well-ascertained facts before him, Wellington determined to retreat. This was soon after eight o'clock. But he did nothing hurriedly. He sent word to Blucher that he should fall back to the position of Mont St. Jean, and there, if the marshal would support him, fight the enemy. Orders were at once sent to Clinton's and Colville's divisions, the 2nd and 4th of Lord Hill's corps, to march at ten o'clock from Nivelles to Mont St. Jean. Those brigades of Colville's division which were on the road from Braine le Comte to Nivelles, were to return and halt at Braine le Comte. Prince Frederick of Orange

[1] Charras.

was directed to move his Dutch infantry upon Hal, and Colonel Estorff was to place himself and his brigade of Hanoverian horse under the Prince's command. All the baggage was to be forwarded to Hal and Brussels. The infantry in position at Quatre Bras were ordered at the same time to retire along the Brussels road, leaving only the outposts and supports in position, and the cavalry in masses to mask the retreat. Thus Ney was deceived, and Napoleon imposed upon. Covered by the light troops and the display of cavalry, brigade after brigade quitted the position in succession, and defiled through the long narrow street which constituted the town of Genappe. Alten's division, slightly reinforced, was the last to quit the field, but a little before noon the outposts were rallied upon the main body, and the whole was conducted skilfully, in order of battle, to the rear, passing through Bezy and crossing the branch of the Dyle at Wais le Hutte, a few miles below Genappe. Thus the infantry brigades fell back upon Mont St. Jean.

Not a shot had hitherto been fired. Ney's masses had been under arms since the dawn, but they were silent and inactive, The withdrawal of the infantry outposts produced the first sign of life in the French lines, and the marshal brought up his cavalry to face the British. Wellington at this time occupied the position with a mass of horsemen, under the Earl of Uxbridge. Vivian and Vandeleur's light cavalry were on the left, and the Duke himself was with the 10th Hussars, who stood in echelon of squadrons on the scene of Picton's exploits. In the centre were the heavy cavalry of the Household and Union brigades, and on the right of Quatre Bras were Grant's and Dörnberg's light cavalry brigades. The front was covered by pickets of light dragoons and hussars. It was a brilliant spectacle. Beyond Gemioncourt Ney's horse-

men were slowly pressing forward and exchanging shots with the British pickets; and the infantry in heavy columns were moving out from Frasne. On the British left Subervie's lancers, coming from Marbais, were in action with the outposts of Vivian's hussars, and behind them came Milhaud's cuirassiers, whose mail gleamed in the noonday sun. Vivian threw back his left to face the force bearing down upon that flank, and soon the skirmishers were engaged from the Namur road to the eastern fringe of the wood of Bossu. Napoleon was at length in full march from Marbais, and Ney was advancing from Frasne. Wellington did not intend to resist. His purpose had been answered, for his infantry were already through the narrow defile of Genappe, and well on their way to Mont St. Jean. So the three columns went about and retired. The Household and Union brigades, with a rear-guard composed of two light dragoon regiments, withdrew along the high road to Brussels. The right brigades directed their march upon a ford above the town of Genappe. Vivian and Vandeleur followed a by-road that led to Thuy, a few miles below Wais le Hutte. The centre and right columns were followed, but not assailed; and having reached the left bank of the stream, which runs through Genappe, they halted and faced about upon the gentle slopes which rise to the northward of the town. But the left column had no sooner gone about than the French guns opened upon them, and their horse seemed intent upon outflanking the rear regiment, and coming to close quarters. Vivian halted, and prepared to charge, but no sooner had his artillery begun to fire than a violent and drenching thunderstorm broke over them, and made rapid cavalry movements impossible. The ardour of the pursuit relaxed, and no further incident occurred until the brigade reached the river. Vandeleur, who had left to

Vivian the glory of guarding the rear, was still crossing by the bridge. The French were pressing on. Vivian, to check them, immediately brought up the 10th British to support the 1st German Hussars, and kept the French at bay until Vandeleur had crossed. Then he sent back the 10th, with orders to dismount and line the bank on the other side of the bridge. The situation was critical. One squadron of the 1st, retiring, was cut off, and compelled to seek a ford lower down. The French, coming up in great force, seemed to be sure of overthrowing the Germans, when Vivian gave the word, and his hussars galloped down the road and over the bridge. The French dashed after them with loud shouts, but they were too late. The 10th Hussars on the opposite bank saluted them with a brisk fire, and a regiment and a half was in readiness to charge if they ventured to cross. They refrained, and the British, unmolested, proceeded through the deep country lanes by Glabbaix, Maransart, and Frischermont, to Verd-Cocou, on the east of Mont St. Jean. In like manner, but without molestation, the right column had retreated into the position of Waterloo.

The centre column, meanwhile, had been engaged at Genappe. The 7th Hussars formed the rear-guard, and as their last troop galloped through the town, the French poured after in considerable numbers. When the head of these densely-packed columns emerged on the other side, they found themselves in presence of the whole of the centre British column. Nearest the town were the 7th Hussars, beyond them, in support, the 23rd Light Dragoons, and in rear the heavy brigades in columns of half squadrons on each side of the main road. The French lancers first appeared and halted, but those in rear continuing to press on through the tortuous street, the whole defile became packed with horsemen. Seeing the reluct-

ance of the French to move, Lord Uxbridge directed the 7th, his own regiment, to charge. But the 7th proved too light for the work in hand. The lance was a weapon new to the British swordsman. The 7th fought with great bravery; they were engaged on a limited front; the houses protected the flanks of their opponents; but as often as one squadron recoiled from the immovable thicket of lances, another squadron renewed the fight. It was evident, however, that the hussars were overmatched, and their colonel drew them out of the conflict, in order to employ heavier metal. The front was no sooner clear than Lord Uxbridge quietly moved the 1st Life Guards through the 23rd Dragoons, and held them ready for a charge. The moment soon arrived. Warmed by their success, the French began to shout their favourite battle-cry, "*En avant!*" to animate each other, and to press up the ascent. In an instant the Life Guards, "big men on big horses," obedient to the signal of their chief, went with the roar of a torrent *down* the hill, the stream of red coats and gleaming swords overturning everything before it, and speedily filling up the space where the brilliant lancers had stood, but where they now lay, followed up the flying, and cleared Genappe of the enemy. This vigorous stroke taught the French to be cautious; but they kept close at the heels of the retiring column. The guns on both sides were engaged at intervals, and the skirmishers continuously, until the retreat ended at Mont St. Jean.

The rain had fallen heavily throughout the afternoon, and had soaked the soil of the fields, so that the French infantry found the march extremely painful.[1] They came

[1] And of course the British. "Whenever the troops left the great chaussées [paved roads]," writes Sir James Shaw Kennedy, "they were placed in situations of great difficulty. This was proved on the 17th of June by the movement of the 3rd Division [with which he was] through

on, struggling through the miry soil with plodding steps, and were still distant, when Subervie and Domont and Milhaud, who had led the pursuit, halted near La Belle Alliance. Napoleon had ridden from Quatre Bras, and was with them, and he ascertained, by provoking a cannonade from about La Haye Sainte, that Wellington's army was in position before him.

Napoleon says he wished for the power of Joshua to stop the sun for *two* hours, that he might attack the English. This could only have been an empty boast, for the bulk of his infantry did not arrive in line until two hours *after* he had uttered it. Only D'Erlon, Lobau, and the Guard were up, even at eight o'clock, and Reille was still at Genappe, where he halted until the next morning. It would have served Napoleon's purpose better could he have stopped the rain.

The French army took up its position for the night in rear of La Belle Alliance, the right touching Planchenoit, the left Mon Plaisir. The corps of D'Erlon and Lobau were in the front line; the Guard and cavalry in the rear. Behind all, at the farm of Caillou, Napoleon fixed his head-quarters.

Wellington, on his side, had collected nearly his whole

Wais le Hutte, where it crossed the Dyle, and its march was ordered to be by cross-roads parallel to the great chaussées [from Charleroi to Brussels]. After crossing the Dyle the march on the cross-roads became so difficult as absolutely to make the situation of the division in some degree perilous; it did lose some of its baggage, and the division felt as relieved from a very unpleasant situation when it moved, without orders from head-quarters, into the great chaussée." In another place he reminds the reader that the "violent rain, which began about three o'clock on the 17th, continued through the night. The violent rain fell upon the whole of the country on which the armies of Wellington, Blucher, and Napoleon marched during the 17th, and rendered the cross-roads in the whole of that country all but impassable."

disposable force in the position of Mont St. Jean. Sir John Lambert's brigade of Sir Lowry Cole's division was still on its way from Ghent. Wellington had not altered the disposition of the detached column on his right, except so far as to instruct Sir Charles Colville to retire from Braine le Comte upon Hal; and to direct Prince Frederick to occupy the position between Hal and Enghien, and defend it as long as possible. Blucher's reply to Wellington's despatch of the morning reached the English general in the evening, at Waterloo. "I will join you," wrote the Prussian marshal, "not only with two corps, but with my whole army; and if the enemy does not attack you on the 18th, we will attack him together on the 19th." A hardy pledge, which was fulfilled nearly to the letter.

As the night closed, a thunderstorm, like that which had signalized the commencement of the retreat of the cavalry from Quatre Bras, again broke over the country; and the rain, which had abated, fell with renewed violence, inundating the valleys occupied by the outposts, and soaking the fields on the higher ground. The positions of the rival armies were soon marked out by the ruddy fires around which slept the wearied soldiers.

§ 4. *Blucher retires upon Wavre.*

The Prussian generals had made good use of the precious hours of the 17th. Gneisenau, who took command when Blucher was wounded, had, at nightfall, directed the corps of Zeithen and Pirch I. to march at once from the field of Ligny upon Tilly and Gentinnes. The retreat was protected by a strong rear-guard, posted in Bry, and by the corps of Thielemann, which occupied Sombref and Point du Jour, with instructions to remain until daybreak, At the first flush of dawn on the 17th, Zeithen and Pirch

marched from Tilly and Gentinnes towards Wavre, where the whole army was to assemble. The route of the 1st and 2nd corps was by Mont St, Guibert, whence, by inclining to the left, they followed the right bank of the Dyle. Zeithen had crossed this river at midday, when Napoleon was still at St. Amand, and Wellington watching with his cavalry at Quatre Bras. Pirch, halting some time at Mont St. Guibert, continued his retreat after he had been joined by General von Jagow, who had remained until dawn in absolute possession of the village of Bry. Pirch went on and occupied a position on the right bank of the Dyle, opposite Wavre. Before he quitted Mont St. Guibert he left Colonel von Sohr, with a rear-guard of cavalry, between Tilly and Gentinnes. Von Sohr's instructions were to keep the keenest watch upon the movements of the enemy, and not to fall back upon Mont St. Guibert until it was absolutely necessary. Bulow, coming from Hannut, had halted the 4th corps, on the evening of the 16th, on the Roman road near Sauvenières, the head of the column being about nine miles from Sombref. He was at daylight directed to detach a force of all arms upon Mont St. Guibert, to relieve Von Sohr, and ordered to march his main body upon Dion le Mont, a village about four miles east of Wavre. Thus, in the afternoon, the three corps of Ziethen, Pirch, and Bulow were, in a military sense, brought into close connection about Wavre. For Ziethen, at Bierge, communicated freely with Pirch at Aisemont, by Wavre and the bridges of Bierge and Limale; and Bulow, at Dion le Mont, was within three miles of Pirch.

Late in the evening the 3rd corps closed upon the main body. Thielemann's rear-guard had quitted the field of battle about the time that Von Jagow had stolen out of Bry. No one saw, apparently, the departure either of the entire corps or of the rear-guard. Both the larger and

lesser body vanished without attracting the notice of a single sentinel or patrol. Thielemann proceeded slowly to Gembloux, halted there some hours to rest his men, and then pursued his way. But he was caught in the storm which raged over the whole country, and he did not cross the Dyle to take post at Les Bavettes north-west of Wavre until the evening.

The Prussians still held Mont St. Guibert and Vieux Sart, upon the two roads they had followed in their retreat. Moreover, they had sent patrols through the whole country between the Dyle and the Lasne. The Prussian dragoons were in every lane and village; and thus the officers detached on this service not only detected the march of Napoleon upon Quatre Bras and La Belle Alliance, but they reconnoitred the course of the Lasne from Couture to Genval, took note of every defile, road, stream, and wood, and thereby acquired the invaluable information that neither Napoleon nor Grouchy had sent a single patrol into the country between the two allied armies. It was through these active patrols that the Duke of Wellington was kept informed fully of the movements of Blucher. By these means the Prussian general carried his army deftly out of reach of the French, placed it in a position separated from Wellington by a few miles only, and acquired the most ample knowledge of the inactivity, as well as the subsequent movements, of the common foe. Before night on the 17th, Blucher, worsted but not routed at Ligny, had rallied at Wavre nearly 90,000 men and 260 guns, and was prepared to fall the next day with the greater part of these upon the right rear of Napoleon. As the sun went down, the Prussian soldiers eagerly refilled their pouches with ammunition, and supplies were refurnished to the artillery. Many had fallen in the bloody combat of the 16th, some 8,000 had literally ran away

towards Namur and Liége; but those who remained thirsted for one more opportunity of meeting the French in battle. This they were promised by their unshaken chief. "I will lead you against the enemy, and you will beat him," was the succinct address of Blucher to his soldiers; "for," he added with characteristic emphasis, "it is your *duty* to do so."

§ 5. *Grouchy in Pursuit.*

We have already described the circumstances under which the French Emperor arrived at the determination to detach Marshal Grouchy against the Prussians. Napoleon was informed that Wellington was still at Quatre Bras. He had also been informed that Pajol had captured a Prussian battery on the road to Namur. He appears to have believed that Blucher had fallen back upon his natural line of communications with Germany. He therefore told Grouchy to pursue the Prussians, complete their defeat, and not lose sight of them. We have seen that these instructions were all based on conjectures, and not on facts. Wellington held Quatre Bras with his cavalry only; the Prussians were already lost to the view of the French; and Blucher had quitted his direct line of communications with Germany expressly to carry his army into line at Mont St. Jean. Grouchy, we are told, raised some objections, and begged that he might follow the Emperor, but the Emperor simply repeated his commands. Grouchy obeyed and departed. The corps of Gérard and Vandamme, placed under his orders, were not in readiness to march, and during the time occupied in collecting the troops and completing the preparations, Napoleon learned that at least a portion of the Prussian army had retired upon Gembloux. This information seems to have been

obtained by an infantry patrol, which, late in the morning, had been detached from Pajol's force. Napoleon now formally instructed Grouchy to move upon Gembloux. He was to patrol in the direction of Namur and Maestricht, and communicate with Napoleon by the Namur road. Yet some doubts of the correctness of his views had entered the mind of the Emperor before he quitted Ligny, and he remarked to Grouchy that it was important to learn whether the Prussians were separating themselves from the British, or whether they were bent on uniting to cover Brussels *and* (!) Liége.

Grouchy did not march till two o'clock, Vandamme did not reach Gembloux until nearly nine, and it was ten before the whole of Gérard's corps joined him. The heavy by-roads, saturated by the continuous torrents of rain, had rendered it impossible for the tired soldiers of these corps to get over more than ten miles in seven hours. Even at Gembloux Grouchy could learn little of the movements of the Prussians. He had preceded the main body, and had sent Excelmans to Sauvenières with orders to patrol the roads to Sart-lez-Walhain and Perwez. The result of these inquiries was unsatisfactory. At ten that night Grouchy wrote to Napoleon, but he could only inform him that the Prussians appeared to be divided into three columns. One, he says, had taken the road to Wavre, one to Perwez, one with the artillery to Liége. He conjectured that one part sought to join Wellington. Thus, on the night of the 17th, Grouchy stood at Gembloux, nearly as ignorant of the true state of affairs as he was when he quitted Ligny. He had patrolled on his right; he had not patrolled on his left. This was a fatal negligence. Napoleon, it is true, had not directed him, in so many words, to keep a good look-out on his left, and Grouchy did not supply the grave omission. Yet, as we have seen, the

greater part of the Prussian army retreated from Ligny by the defile of Mont St. Guibert, a few miles on the west of Gembloux. This fact remained unknown at the head-quarters of both the French generals throughout the night of the 17th, and to Grouchy at least until late on the 18th, when he received the information from Napoleon in a despatch written from Caillou at ten in the morning of the 18th, in answer to a report from Grouchy despatched at two in the morning, notifying his intention to march upon Sartlez-Walhain.

CHAPTER VIII.

RETROSPECTIVE.

WE have now traced the course of the campaign since the evening of the 14th. We have seen Napoleon gather up his splendid army between the Sambre and Meuse with a rapidity and precision almost unparalleled in warfare. We have seen Wellington and Blucher keenly watchful and prepared to encounter the greatest strategist of his age—a soldier whose eye was sure, whose plans were profound, whose hand was swift to strike, and whose soldiers were the finest in quality he had ever led into the field; men of one nation, greedy of glory, and animated by a spirit of absolute devotion to their leader. We have seen this army, at a signal from its chief, project itself suddenly across the frontier, and, by a series of brilliant movements, open a campaign which, in its issues, promised to rival the grand triumphs of the Empire. None in that joyous host could have dreamed that, in a few weeks from that day, the aggressive spirit of France would be stricken down and laid in bonds for five-and-thirty years. Before we proceed to the military climax of our story, it may be well, for the convenience of the reader, to offer him a concise estimate of the results of the campaign up to the evening of the 17th.

In order to measure those results, we must compare the

intentions of Napoleon with his actual achievements. When he selected the inner flanks of the allied armies for attack, he calculated that he should beat both in detail. He looked over the wide range of their cantonments, stretching from Liége to the Scheldt, and he believed he could drive his army like a bolt through them, crushing in its progress the fragments of armies with which alone, as he assumed, the Allies could oppose him. He did not contemplate the gigantic task of fighting four considerable battles within three days; he did not believe that either the fiery Prussians or the cool Englishmen could concentrate across the road to Brussels any force which he could not overwhelm. He had collected his army with great speed, skill, secrecy; he had devised a brilliant plan of action; and he had a right to count on success, providing he had appreciated the ability and activity of his adversaries.

We are endeavouring to place ourselves in the position of Napoleon on the night of the 14th, and to exclude from view, as much as possible, the events of the four subsequent days; the only method whereby we can learn how those events came to pass.

Napoleon put his army in motion at the dawn of day. The broad and deep torrents of men and guns rolled across the frontier. In that magnificent development of well-combined force only one serious *contretemps* occurred, for even the desertion of Bourmont was too late to be as deadly as it was intended. Although the exact movement of the French had not been foreseen, the Prussians were so vigilant that they were not surprised, and Ziethen, acting on the instructions he had received from head-quarters, offered a cool and calculated resistance, in order that he might cover the retreat of his distant detachments upon Fleurus, and give his commander time to concentrate his army. He could do no more. The French columns

crossed the river fighting the enemy at all points, and of course driving him back; but as the great streams of French soldiers flowed on towards Gilly and Gosselies, the smaller streams of Prussians trickled in detachments towards Fleurus. Ziethen, though his troops were so widely scattered, had ably drawn his detachments together, and at night stood collected in rear of Fleurus. The French columns on the 15th reached Frasne on the road to Brussels, and Lambusart on the road to Fleurus, and from these points they stretched backward even beyond the Sambre. The French had accomplished a good day's work; Napoleon had made a rapid inroad into a corner of the enemy's lines, but he had done nothing to prevent the concentration of the allied armies; he had not driven a wedge between them; he had not seized the great road leading from the heart of the Prussian into the heart of the British cantonments; he had not surprised the allied armies; and he had halted, and retired to rest, far from the road connecting Nivelles and Namur.

Ziethen had most ably handled the forces at his disposal. He committed only one fault: he did not apprise Wellington of the decided character of the French attack; but this he atoned for by the resistance he offered to Napoleon, and by the display of daring he made in holding fast to Fleurus. For the conduct of Ziethen, not less than the delays in the marches of the French corps through a roadless district, enabled the corps of Pirch and Thielemann to march unmolested upon Sombref.

Wellington, deprived of exact information until late in the evening, did not direct the march of a single brigade. His share in the operations of the 15th was, from this cause, absolutely *nil*. But at night he issued orders conformable to the nature of the information supplied to him. For this he has been censured; but those who so censure

him overlook the practical character of the man, and the not less important fact that he knew he had before him a great strategist—one who was essentially a manœuvring general—one who had decided more campaigns by marches than by battles; and when we find Wellington censured, almost ridiculed, because he was so jealous of his right flank, truth requires an emphatic recognition of this fact. In the previous campaign, Napoleon had displayed his genius in devising and executing totally unexpected attacks; therefore, he was the last man before whom it was safe to act upon conjecture.

On the evening of the 15th, then, Napoleon had partially crossed the Sambre; Blucher, thanks to Ziethen's fine soldiership, had been able to direct two other corps upon Sombref; Wellington had caused his divisions to concentrate, and had drawn them closer together, and closer to his left. It is clear from this statement that the success of Napoleon's plans would depend upon the use he made of the morning of the 16th.

And here we encounter the fatal fact—Napoleon made no use of the morning of the 16th. Every keen observer, fresh from the story of his earlier and even his latest campaigns, has noted with amazement, with a kind of sorrowful astonishment, the inactivity of the most active of great captains. And, as we may note, in nothing was that inactivity shown so much as in his absolute neglect to obtain accurate information. The consequence of that neglect was twofold:—1st, it produced the greatest hesitation in the adoption of any decisive plan; 2nd, it led him to issue orders to his executive officers which it was impossible they could execute. He spoke of directing Grouchy upon Sombref, and of advancing to Gembloux; he ordered Ney to occupy Quatre Bras, and even advance to Genappe. Yet when he did so, for all he knew, one-

half of Wellington's army might have been in position in front of Quatre Bras; nothing prevented it but Ziethen's neglect to send a special messenger to Brussels; while three-fourths of Blucher's force was actually on or near the position of Sombref. His orders and his projects were based undoubtedly upon the information he had obtained up to the moment when he devised and issued them; but no one has ever ventured to state that Napoleon could not have had, nor that the Bonaparte of '96 and 1800 would not have had, the most complete and accurate knowledge of his enemies' movements which it was possible for patrols and scouts to obtain. Yet nothing is so certain as that he did not obtain the information for himself, nor believe the intelligence sent in by Grouchy and Girard. He seems to have made up his mind (and it is a most amazing fact) that Wellington would collect at Nivelles and retire upon Brussels, and Blucher concentrate upon Namur, because Wellington's communications were with England through Antwerp and Ostend; and Blucher's through Namur, Liège, and Maestricht with the Rhine. Hence the protracted halt on the morning of the 16th, hence the battle on the afternoon of that day, fruitful only in another bulletin. The long delay enabled Blucher to occupy the position of Ligny, and Wellington to march a sufficient number of troops upon Quatre Bras to frustrate, to repulse Ney.

The morning of the 17th found Napoleon still in the same frame of mind—still assuming what his enemies would do, instead of ascertaining what they had done—still halting, pondering, doubting, and reasoning upon imperfect information. The two Allies, on the other hand, had been actively engaged in watching him, and placing themselves beyond his reach; one by retiring to Wavre, the other by withdrawing his infantry and impedi-

menta, and amusing both Ney and Napoleon with nothing but cavalry and a few guns. The division of the French army into two parts, the separation of those parts by a wide distance, the neglect of both Napoleon and Grouchy to keep up a connection with each other by strong patrols, while their enemies were alert and in close communication —a fact which neither Napoleon nor Grouchy knew—completed their share in the preparation for the crushing defeat that was to come. The evening of the 17th found Grouchy at Gembloux and Napoleon at La Belle Alliance. Between them lay a vast space, traversed only by bad country roads, every yard of which was jealously watched by the Prussian cavalry. The distance, in a direct line, was twenty-two miles, while the route of communication by Quatre Bras was half as long again. Instead of defeating the Allies in detail, Napoleon's blind confidence had led him into a position where the French army was almost sure to be defeated in detail itself. For, and this is the key to the battle of the 18th, Wellington had undertaken to fight, provided Blucher would come up and assail the French in flank, and Blucher had pledged his word that he would come up, and that word he was destined to redeem. Napoleon believed he was about to fight the English alone. He did not know, as we know now, that his enemies had combined to destroy him. Hence his immense joy, his unbounded confidence, when, on the morning of the 18th, he found Wellington still before him. He believed he had him all to himself for the rest of the day. Hence, perhaps, that slowness in attacking the British general which has drawn down upon Napoleon such heavy censures. Why should he hasten to attack, until the ground was dry, when he believed he had his enemy isolated and in his power?

Thus, far from being "surprised in their cantonments,"

three days' fighting and marching had sufficed to bring the two allied generals into such relative positions, as enabled them to prepare an astounding surprise for Napoleon himself, and far from being "out-generaled" by him, he was about to learn that he had been out-generaled by them.

Nevertheless, the stroke of Napoleon, although not swift enough, had been swift—although not deadly, it had been severe; so far as mortals, on that morning, could dive into the future, not one could foresee the result. Wellington had not been able to succour Blucher at Ligny, Blucher might not be able to succour Wellington at Waterloo. Napoleon was there with a mighty army, the most gallant, confident, complete he had ever led. He was still the greatest captain of the nineteenth century in the eyes of his own and his adversaries' soldiers, and of the nations of Europe. Why should he not prevail over adverse circumstances, by the might of genius, as he had so often prevailed before? We know, but he did not know, that the chances against him were at least three to two; but from his point of view the chances for him *were*, as he estimated them, ninety to ten—only the point of view was false.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MORNING OF THE 18TH OF JUNE.

§ 1. *Movements of Grouchy.*

GROUCHY passed the night at Gembloux, perplexed and agitated in mind. He has been described as "anxious and undecided," and when a general has lost his way he can hardly escape the pains and penalties of anxiety and indecision. All he knew was that a body of Prussians had passed through Gembloux on the 17th, and that they appeared to have divided into two columns, one moving upon Wavre, the other on Perwez, and that Blucher had not passed through Gembloux. In this extremity of doubt he still clung to the idea suggested by the capture of cannon on the Namur road, confirmed by the instructions of Napoleon, that the mass of the Prussians had gone off towards Maestricht. Yet the unwelcome doubt returned, and he feared that Blucher might be at Wavre. He therefore took a medium course, and ordered the mass of his force to move off in succession on the 18th to Sart-lez-Walhain, but not to march until six o'clock. Pajol and Teste, who had halted far in the rear at Mazy, were to move at five upon Grand Leez, a village on the right flank of the road to Sart-lez-Walhain. They were to halt there until they received a new direction in accordance with

that of the main body: further evidence of Grouchy's perplexity.

The sun was high when Grouchy rode off to Sart-lez-Walhain. His whole force followed him in one long column, struggling painfully along the miry roads and wet fields, through defiles which brought them to frequent halts. Nor did they start at the prescribed hour; for the leader of the procession, Excelmans, did not march until seven o'clock. When this officer arrived at Sart-lez-Walhain, Grouchy, it is said, was told that the whole of the Prussian army had arrived at Wavre on the 17th. Excelmans was at once directed to move upon Corbaix, and as the infantry appeared, the head of the column was turned to the north-west, in the wake of the horsemen. Yet the troops had marched so slowly that the head of Gérard's column did not reach Sart-lez-Walhain until half-past eleven. Grouchy himself, still fearful of committing an error, and utterly ignorant of the true state of the case, remained in the house of the village notary, Hollaert, pondering on probabilities. He had sent a despatch to Napoleon, informing him that he was then, about half-past eleven, moving upon Wavre by Corbaix. At the moment when Colonel Delafresnaye galloped off with this despatch, Gérard came up, and almost at the same time Colonel Simon Lorière walked in from the garden and reported that a cannonade was audible towards the west. Grouchy, Gérard, and several officers walked into the garden and listened in silence. Some of them placed their ears to the ground and thus detected plainly the muffled boom of distant guns. While they were listening, the dull reverberations increased suddenly in volume and intensity, and none of the excited group could doubt any longer that artillery was violently engaged in the direction of Mont St. Jean. Thereupon

ensued spontaneously a keen discussion. Gérard urged Grouchy to cross the Dyle at once, push on towards the scene of action, passing by Moustier and Ottignies, and reconnoitring in the direction of St. Lambert. General Balthus, of the artillery, reminding Gérard of the state of the roads, inquired how the artillery could be got across the country: that morning they had been four hours marching six miles! To which Valazé answered that his engineers would clear the way. Grouchy, however, was unmoved by Gérard's reasoning and Valazé's vehemence, and he determined to pursue his march upon Wavre.[1]

Riding forward to the head of the column, where the cavalry had come in contact with the Prussian rear-guard, Grouchy was overtaken by a messenger bringing a despatch from Napoleon, written by the chief of the staff at ten o'clock that morning in the farm of Caillou. As nearly three hours must have been occupied in the transit, the time must have been about one o'clock. Soult informed Grouchy that the French patrols on the Dyle had learned that one Prussian column had retired on Wavre by Gentinnes. Grouchy, therefore, was to push this column before him, keeping, at the same time, a good look-out on his right. But Grouchy knew by this time there was no need for this precaution, for he had learned that the whole Prussian army had assembled at Wavre. Here, then, was his difficulty. The Emperor stated that he was

[1] On this subject there has been a great deal of hot controversy. It is difficult now to establish even the facts of the interview, for the controversy of course has been carried on with a full knowledge of all that occurred on the 18th, and one vainly tries to disentangle the statements made in the notary's garden from the statements which suggested themselves afterwards. Those who desire to see what has been said on both sides must seek it in the pamphlets published by Grouchy, Gérard, and others. For our present purpose it is enough to know what Gérard proposed and what Grouchy did.

about to attack the English in front of the forest of Soignies—a fact which fully accounted for the cannonade —and therefore Grouchy was directed to fulfil a double task—to drive off the Prussians, and manœuvre by his left so as to approach Napoleon, taking care, at the same time, to maintain a secure and close communication between the two armies. Grouchy, therefore, pressed forward with his whole force, keeping studiously on the right bank of the Dyle; but with his utmost efforts he could not bring his troops into line opposite Wavre until four o'clock. At that hour the Prussian main body was far away; yet enough remained to dispute with Grouchy the passage of the Dyle, and to fight with him the Combat of Wavre.

§ 2. *Blucher's Flank March.*

Blucher had profited by the mistakes, delays, and mischances of Grouchy. He had employed the precious hours of the morning in putting in execution the plan devised between himself and Wellington. He designed to carry his whole army as soon as possible to the battle-field selected by the English general. As the roads along which his soldiers would have to travel were mere tracks through the fields, none paved, and all saturated with rain, he sent his heavy baggage to Louvain. Then he directed his four corps d'armée to move off in succession in two columns. Bulow was to start at daybreak and gain Chapelle St. Lambert. Ziethen, by another route, was to make for Ohain, passing through Fromont and Genval. Later still Pirch I. was to follow Bulow to St. Lambert, and, finally, if the French, of whom there were no signs, did not come up, Thielemann, leaving a rear-guard at Wavre, was to march upon Couture, on the Lasne. Napo-

leon, in a candid moment, confessed that this flank march was a stroke of genius. Blucher and Gneisenau had taken pains to ensure its success by scouring the whole country between the Dyle and the Lasne; and by extending patrols to the very verge of the right flank of the French, towards Planchenoit, they had discovered that there were no forces in that direction to dispute the defiles of the Lasne.

It will be remembered that on the evening of the 17th the Prussian army bivouacked on both banks of the Dyle. Ziethen was on the left bank about Bierge, with Thielemann on his left at Les Bavettes. On the other bank were Pirch I., at Aisemont, close to Wavre, and Bulow at Dion le Mont, some three miles distant. Before any movement could be made upon St. Lambert by the untouched corps of Bulow, that corps would have to march on Wavre and pass the Dyle. One does not see why Blucher kept Bulow on the right bank of the Dyle when he contemplated throwing his whole force upon the right flank of Napoleon. He had fairly abandoned the road from Namur to Louvain, and his direct communications with Germany. The success of the scheme for the destruction of Napoleon depended on the rapidity of his march through a deep and rugged country; Bulow's troops, not having been engaged as yet, were clearly the proper corps to be sent forward. Wherefore, then, keep them at Dion le Mont until the morning of the 18th, when they might have cleared the defile of Wavre at leisure on the evening of the 17th?

When Bulow moved, between three and four o'clock, much time was lost in getting through the town. A fire broke out in the main street, and not only hindered the passage of the corps, but imperilled the whole place, for it was full of ammunition waggons. Happily the fire was quenched, and the soldiers of Bulow started for St. Lam-

bert. Quitting the Dyle at Bierge, they turned to the right and followed the country roads, marching painfully through the stiff soil, or struggling across the fields rich with splendid crops, but very tiring to the Prussian soldiers. The infantry made slow progress in the deep mud, and the artillery frequently required the aid of stout shoulders to force the wheels out of the deep ruts. The march from Bierge to St. Lambert across the open and hilly country was the easiest part of the route. It was the sand and clay of the valley of the Lasne that brought the brigades so often to a halt. Only those who, amidst thick and increasing rain, have traversed on foot the road taken by Bulow from Bierge to Planchenoit, will be able to appreciate fully the inflexible will, the grim energy of Blucher, and the sturdy character of the troops whom he forced through the narrow roads and slippery swampy defiles of the valley of the Lasne.

The Prussian commander rode out of Wavre about eleven o'clock, and hastened to join Bulow's column, that he might not only guide its ulterior movements, but stimulate the soldiers with his cheery words and battle-cry of "Forwärts!" Ziethen moved off about noon, ascending from the valley to Pont du Jour, and, turning to his left, passed onwards to Genval, leaving Rixansart on his right, and moved towards Ohain. Similar obstacles delayed his march, and similar exertions were needed to carry the corps forward. Pirch I., preparing to follow on the route taken by Bulow, was delayed some time by receiving a report that the French had attacked the outposts at Auzel and St. Anne. Indeed Grouchy, from the heights in front of La Baraque, had been able to distinguish the winding march of dark columns over the open country on the left bank of the Dyle, and it must have added to his solicitude when he saw that they were hastening towards the sound

of the cannon away to the west. Pirch, like Bulow, had to defile through Wavre; and, pending the progress of his troops, he reinforced his outposts, and held the French horse in check until Vandamme debouched from the woods. Pirch I. gave the command of the rear-guard to General Brause, and hastened on with the greater part of his corps. It was nearly four o'clock before Brause, with the rear-guard, crossed the Dyle, followed the corps to which it belonged, and left to Thielemann the duty of defending Wavre.

Having put these corps in motion towards Planchenoit and Mont St. Jean, we must once more turn to the main stream of our story—to the field of Waterloo, whence came the roar of that cannonade which perplexed the French and spurred on the Prussians.

§ 3. *Mont St. Jean and La Belle Alliance.*

The storm of the 17th was prolonged until the next morning. The rain fell heavily; flashes of lightning illumined the dreary scene, and revealed the sentries to each other, but loud peals of thunder did not awaken the tired soldiers from their deep slumber. The fires of the bivouac threw a ruddy glare over the field, and the canopy of clouds in fainter flushes reflected them above. In the low grounds the vedettes and pickets were standing in pools of water, or sitting on straw, plundered from the adjacent farms. All night the villagers were engaged in bringing billets of wood to keep the fires alive. Here and there some of the old soldiers had made themselves tents —blankets supported upon muskets; some were scantily sheltered under bushes and hedges; some in the farms; but the bulk were under the open sky.

The French, across the valley, having less fuel, passed a

more miserable night; but they had hope that the morrow would bring them victory. Napoleon's head-quarters were in the farm of Caillou. He could no longer, as in old times, sleep and wake at will. In the middle of the night he sallied forth with General Bertrand, to satisfy himself that his enemy had not escaped, and the blaze of red light far on either side of Mont St. Jean, accepted as a sign that the English were there, filled him with delight. Yet might not the bivouac fires be a mere trick of war to cover the retreat of the enemy? He walked along the range of the in-lying pickets as far as the southern side of the wood of Hougoumont, and, listening in the stillness, fancied he heard the movement of a column of men. But he heard nothing; the sound was imaginary; no movement took place that night within the British lines. He returned to Caillou, and there received reports from the outposts and from deserters which satisfied him that his enemy had not escaped. Later, an orderly brought in the perplexed despatch which Grouchy had written the night before at Gembloux, indicating Liège as the point towards which the main body of Prussians had retreated, and this was to him an assurance that he had nothing to fear on his right. Yet, later still, when he heard from Domont's patrols that a Prussian column had retreated from Ligny by Tilly and Gentinnes, some suspicions, one would think, may have crept into his mind. If so, they must have been stifled, as they arose, by the firm belief he entertained that he had routed as well as defeated Blucher on the 16th.

Wellington had fixed his head-quarters in the village of Waterloo, lying in a small clearing on the southern skirt of the forest of Soignies, and almost surrounded by its tall trees. Thither came and went the orderlies from the Prussians at Wavre, and from the army in front, and from the detachment on the right flank. It was a busy night,

and before three in the morning the Duke was at his desk. He, too, was as confident as Napoleon, but with better reason, for he knew that the Prussians would be ready to march with the morning light, and that they would march, not towards the Rhine, but towards the right flank of the French army and his own left. He had only one apprehension. Although the weather was terrible and the roads detestable, although he had the corps of Prince Frederick of Orange between Hal and Enghien, he still thought the enemy might turn him by Hal. This was, he said, "the only risk" he ran. And because he entertained this apprehension, and because he provided against it, he has been much censured; but reasonable persons will agree with him, that in war it is necessary, above all things, to be provident. He could not foresee whether Napoleon would fight or manœuvre. He could foresee that Napoleon might fight or manœuvre. He prepared, therefore, to meet him upon both suppositions—to fight him at Mont St. Jean; to stop him, if possible, at Hal, should he seek to move by that road upon Brussels and Antwerp. If it be a maxim in war that as little as possible should be left to chance, then the Duke was right. Moreover, he had confidence in Blucher, and since the latter would at daybreak march an army to join him, he could well spare 17,000 men to secure the road to Brussels by Hal. It is, however, an open question whether, when the whole force at Napoleon's disposal was visible to Wellington from the ridge of Mont St. Jean, he ought not to have called up the corps of Prince Frederick. "Wellington," wrote Sir James Shaw Kennedy, "ought certainly to have had Colville," and two of his brigades "on the field of battle at Waterloo." The neglect to order up the entire force at Hal, writes Colonel Charras, was "the only fault" Wellington committed at Waterloo. That may be; but ere the sun had risen,

Wellington was perfectly right in keeping a strong force in position on one of the great paved roads to Brussels. It was the consciousness that he had done his utmost to parry Napoleon in either case that enabled him to write with an equable mind to Sir Charles Stuart at Brussels, and to the Duke of Berry at Ghent, that "all would yet turn out well." Had Napoleon shown a similar prevision, and felt well beyond *his* right flank—had he occupied the woods commanding the defiles of the Lasne, who can say that the result would not have been something short of disaster?

Between three and four the day broke over the cheerless landscape. The rain still fell, and continued to fall until six o'clock. The light of the sun was obscured by a thick mass of clouds. The woods were dripping with wet; the heavy crops were made heavier by the moisture; the ground was plashy and yielding, and in the depths of the valleys were wide pools. The air was filled with mist, and as far as the eye could see the whole country was dark, silent, and dreary. Between the two armies stood the watchful sentries and vedettes, crowning the little ridges in front of Mont St. Jean. No other sound of waking life was visible at daybreak; the Anglo-Allied army still remained in comfortless slumber. Soon the men awoke, and the plateau was covered with a moving mass. The soldiers looked "cold and blue, dirty and unshaven." They rose from the sleep of the short night stiff and numbed, but gradually shaking off the feeling of weariness, they fell heartily to work, cooking their breakfasts, cleaning their arms, feeding their horses, fetching wood, water, and straw. "The sound of preparation," says one who was present, "reminded me forcibly of the distant murmur of the waves of the sea beating against some iron-bound coast."[1]

[1] An officer of Picton's division.—"U. S. Mag.," June, 1841.

Seventy thousand men were in confused irregular motion over the plateau.

On the opposite side of the valley, but unseen from the British position, a similar spectacle was visible in the French lines. Reille's corps, left all night at Genappe, was on the march to join the main body. They arrived and found their comrades wet and bemired, but gay and high-spirited; for this army shared the boundless confidence of its chief, and believed with him that victory was certain. Napoleon's first desire was to learn whether his enemy still remained before him, and of this he was soon satisfied. There was the line of outposts, and from the mass on the plateau, invisible to him, came faintly that murmur which has been likened to the wash of the surf upon a rocky shore. Napoleon's next care was to ascertain whether the English commander had covered his front with earthworks, and General Haxo, sent to reconnoitre, soon returned to inform him that a barricade on the high road was the sole defensive work along the front. The Emperor believed his schemes had succeeded, and that he had Wellington at his mercy. It was now broad day; the rain had ceased; the army was united, yet he did not attack. Hour after hour passed, and there was no movement. Fortune was on the side of Napoleon, for had he not isolated Wellington from the Prussians, were not the chances in his favour ninety to ten?—so far as he knew. Yet there were two foes whom he had omitted from his calculation: the rain, which made the fields unfit for the movements of artillery and horsemen, inducing him to defer the onset until the ground had become somewhat firmer; and the Prussians, the heads of whose columns were already in the woodlands of the Lasne, and whose patrols had ridden up to the flankers on the left of the British Army. Napoleon, from La Belle Alliance, sur-

veyed the front of his enemy, and then, between eight and nine o'clock, dictated the order which brought his army into line. The British army was already in position, and the officers of the staff were engaged in giving the final touches to the compact array of men and guns. It is time to describe this famous field.

§ 4. *The Field of Battle.*

The British army was posted in front of Mont St. Jean on a low range of hills running nearly east and west. The great road from Charleroi to Brussels broke through the ridge at right angles, and divided the position into two parts. Parallel to the crest of the ridge, and following its windings, ran a country road, communicating by Ohain and Genval with Wavre, and known as the Wavre road. The paved road from Nivelles, passing through the western side of the ridge, ran into the main Brussels road at the village of Mont St. Jean, where the two chaussées formed an acute angle. The Wavre road corresponded nearly with the front of the British line, and the road from Nivelles traversed the extreme right, and ran diagonally along the rear. The ridge fell sharply towards the south. It has been likened to a natural glacis. On the western side the hill bulged a little southwards, and then turned somewhat abruptly towards the north, the western face sloping into a deep ravine, formerly the bed of the old Nivelles road. On the eastern side of the Charleroi road the southern face of the range was similarly steep, and the line of heights, rising into a knoll a few hundred yards from the main road, edged away towards the north-east, and was lost in the broken country about Ohain. The summit of the ridge throughout its whole length was a narrow plateau, whence the ground sloped away gradually towards the north as far

as the village of Mont St. Jean and the forest of Soignies, whose tall trees limited the field in that direction. The whole was perfectly open and unenclosed. There were no obstacles to the movements of any arm between the ridge and the forest. The two great chaussées and the Wavre road increased the facilities of movement. About six hundred yards in rear of the crest of the ridge stands the farm of Mont St. Jean, abutting on the Brussels road; a quarter of a mile farther on the village itself; and about two miles farther the larger village of Waterloo. On the west of the Nivelles road is the hamlet of Merbe Braine, and west of that the village of Braine l'Alleud, with its grotesque and conspicuous church, a prominent object in the landscape. A cross-road, running into and over the Nivelles road, and thence through the fields to the Wavre road, connects these villages with the position. The advantages of this position were—the slope in front, offering an obstacle to an assailant; the slope in rear, which concealed the strength and disposition of an army from his view; and the free and complete means of communication with every part. The sweep of the eastward ridge to the rear rendered that side somewhat difficult of access; while the slight projection at the opposite extremity, and the falling of the ground to the west, gave it a command over the valley in front and flank.

Nor were these the only advantages of this compact position. On the right, or western side, at the foot of the slope, stood the château, gardens, and wood of Hougoumont, projecting half a mile into the plain. Nearest to the British lines was a large orchard surrounded by thick and tall hedges, a deep ditch running outside the whole of the northern boundary. On the west of this orchard stood the garden, château, farmhouse, and stables, a substantial mass of buildings, enclosed on all sides. A

farm gate opened on the north into an avenue which led to the Nivelles road; a larger and more substantial gate on the southern side, the main entrance, opened on an avenue which traversed the wood and lost itself in the fields. Attached to the château was a large pleasure-garden, enclosed by a brick wall about eight feet high, the eastern side facing into the orchard, and the southern the wood; but between the wood and the southern wall, and separated from it by a belt of the orchard, ran a very thick hedge formed of large trees and tall bushes. This hedge extended as far eastward as the outmost limits of the enclosure. South of this post rose the wood, a dense mass of large trees, closely packed together. This wood, about three hundred and fifty yards in length, and two hundred and fifty in breadth, screened the château from view, and rendered it impossible for an enemy to make a correct estimate of the strength of the post. On the eastern side of the wood were two enclosed fields; on the western, a field and kitchen garden bordered the whole of that side. Here, again, the large trees growing closely together in the hedges formed a natural palisade. It was a field fortress covered on two sides by a living screen. Such was Hougoumont.

In the centre of the position there was a smaller outwork —the farm of La Haye Sainte, standing on the western side of the high road, at the lower part of the slope, and about two hundred yards from the Wavre road. It consisted of a farmhouse, courtyard, and barn. Here the gates were on the east and west, the former opening on the road, the latter into the fields. Southward from the barn was, and is, a small orchard enclosed by a hedge, and northward, extending up the slope, a garden, similarly enclosed. Nearly opposite to La Haye Sainte there was, and is, a knoll and gravel-pit, now overgrown with vegetation, and a little to

the north a hedge and two or three trees. It was across the main road near this point that the British soldiers had constructed an abattis. Here, too, the Brussels road ran between steep banks, formed by cutting a passage through the ridge to diminish the ascent.

On the extreme left or eastern flank, partly on the slope and partly in the ravine, were Papelotte, La Haye, Smohain, a cluster of homesteads and peasants' cots, dropped about amidst some trees and hedges, and communicating with the ridge by several lanes running up the face of the slope. The château of Frischermont, a large building standing in its own grounds, arose upon the face of the opposite hills, but this building and its enclosures were out of the position.

If the reader, looking southward, can now imagine a ridge covered with green crops, swelling forward on the right, withdrawn a little in the centre, and bending backward on the extreme left, with the three groups of buildings and enclosures, which we have described, projecting beyond it, cut in half by a broad paved road, and backed to the north by a thick forest, he will have some conception of the British position at Mont St. Jean.

Opposite to this was a ridge of less marked character, but on the east of higher elevation, running nearly parallel to Mont St. Jean, from the heights about Frischermont, past La Belle Alliance, and at a lower elevation to the southward of the wood of Hougoumont, whence the line of little hills bent towards the north-west, outflanking Hougoumont on that side, and extending over the Nivelles road, here cut through the rise. A lane from Papelotte to La Belle Alliance, and thence to the Nivelles road, marked the front of the French position. Midway between the Wavre road and the cross-road from La Belle Alliance to Papelotte, a range of higher ground, forming the French side of the ravine, ran parallel to the British ridge, as far as a point

opposite to the knoll on the Wavre road, and then sloped away to the farms in the hollow. In rear of the right stood the village of Planchenoit, and three-quarters of a mile from La Belle Alliance, on the high road, stood the large farm of Rossomme. Far away to the eastward were visible the heights of St. Lambert, and the wooded country in the valley of the Lasne, and to the westward the woods of Mon Plaisir.

To fill the position he had selected for a battle with Napoleon the Duke of Wellington had in hand nearly 69,000 men, of which upwards of 12,000 were cavalry, and 156 guns.[1] The first line,[2] extending from the Nivelles

[1] Captain Siborne fixes the numbers present at Waterloo at 67,661 men. He does not explain how he arrived at this estimate. According to a statement printed in the appendix to the first volume of his work Wellington's army consisted of 105,950 men and 196 guns at the outset of the campaign. The whole of the force set down there can be accounted for on the 18th, thus :—

Hanoverian brigades at Antwerp	9,000
British regiments in garrison	3,672
Corps at Hal under Prince Frederick . . .	17,290
2nd German Hussars at Courtrai	564
Sappers and Miners, &c., &c.	1,200
Artillery not present, twelve 18-prs. and six disabled guns	1,100
Losses on the 16th and 17th	4,600
Total	37,426

Deduct 37,426 from 105,950; total at Waterloo 68,524.

There were 196 guns. Deduct twelve 18-prs., 22 guns with the corps at Hal, and six disabled at Quatre Bras, and the total at Waterloo is 156.

This is an empirical mode of calculation. But the returns cannot be entirely relied on. For instance, the Morning State in the Wellington Despatches gives, as "present," of the British and German Legionary Artillery 5,445 (officers included). There were present 96 British and German Legionary guns, and 60 of the other Allies. But if, as Siborne

[2] See Plate III.

road near Hougoumont to the heights above Papelotte and La Haye, was composed entirely of infantry in columns, flanked on the left by two brigades of light cavalry. The second line was composed entirely of cavalry, except on the right, where some masses of infantry were in reserve. We have seen that the Duke believed he only ran one risk—that of being turned on his right by Hal and Tubize. In the disposition of his troops for the battle he also took measures to guard against any attempt to turn him by a shorter movement. But he had another reason for placing the bulk of his troops, horse and foot, on the west of the Charleroi road. The strongest part of the position was the right. There stood Hougoumont; on that side ran the Nivelles road; there the troops were completely concealed. There, he stood across the Nivelles road, which, it must be remembered, became, at Mont St. Jean, one with the Brussels road. The ground dipped on that side into a valley easily defended, and Merbe Braine and Braine l'Alleud formed no indifferent *points d'appui*. Moreover, by posting his reserves on his right he converted the position, on that side, into a citadel, whence he could send at pleasure reinforcements to any part of the line through the perfectly open slopes in rear of the ridge. The ground on the right, therefore, was a stronghold, covering two of the great roads to the Belgian capital. The importance which Wellington attached to this flank may be estimated by the fact that it was here he posted Lord Hill,

states, the numerical force of the *whole* artillery present was only 5,645, there would, according to the Morning State, be only 200 men for 60 guns, an impossible number. Wherefore either the Morning State or Siborne is in error. Under these circumstances, assuming the general statement in the appendix to Vol. I. to be correct, it seems better to deduct from the total all those troops absent from Waterloo for whatever cause, and thus obtain a rough estimate of the number present.

his most trusted lieutenant. Moreover, he expected the Prussians on his left.

The ridge above Hougoumont was occupied by the British Guards under Sir George Cooke, the two brigades being commanded by Byng and Maitland; three battalions on the crest, and one in rear, opposite an interval. It was their duty, in addition, to hold Hougoumont, and for this purpose the light companies of Maitland's brigade, under Lieutenant-Colonel Macdonell, occupied the château, farm buildings, and garden; and those of Byng's brigade, under Lord Saltoun, were posted in the orchards and wood. In the latter also were a regiment of Nassauers and two companies of Hanoverian sharpshooters. The south gate of the buildings had been barricaded, the walls of the garden loop-holed, and a rough scaffolding erected to enable the soldiers to fire over the walls—on the south into the wood, on the east into the orchard. The hedges, where necessary, had been banked with earth, and on the northern boundary the ditch itself afforded a ready-made entrenchment, the fire from which would cross with that from the eastern wall. Byng and Maitland, and the artillery on the crest, commanded the whole of the slope down to the orchard in front and the avenue on the right, and saw into the farmyard, the gate of which had been left open to facilitate communication with the reserves. On the right and rear of the Guards were the regiments of Colonel Mitchell's brigade, the 14th, 23rd, and 51st, some over the ridge, some in the brushwood on the slope, and some in the Hougoumont avenue, near an abattis thrown across the Nivelles road; and farther to the right was a squadron of the 15th Hussars. Their vedettes were on a cross road in the valley leading to Merbe Braine. On the left of the Guards, in succession, stood the brigades of Colin Halkett, Kielmansegge, and Ompteda, forming Alten's division.

Halkett commanded four British regiments, whom we have seen at Quatre Bras, the 30th, 33rd, 69th, and 73rd. Kielmansegge's men were Hanoverian line troops; and Ompteda led four battalions of the well-tried German Legion. One weak battalion from this brigade, under Major Baring, occupied the advance post of La Haye Sainte, immediately in front of its left, and abutting on the high road. Across the road, in succession towards the left, were the remains of the regiments of Picton's division, the heroes of Quatre Bras. Kempt's brigade, resting its right on the high bank of the Charleroi road, was composed of the 32nd, the 79th, the 28th, and the 1st battalion of the 95th Rifles. The last-named regiment lined the Wavre road in front of the 32nd, and had three companies thrown forward, two on a hillock crowned by a hedge and running parallel to the Wavre road, and one in the sand-pit, previously described as opposite the garden in rear of La Haye Sainte. In the interval between Kempt and Pack, and down the exterior slope, with one battalion in reserve, was Bylandt's brigade of Dutch-Belgians, deployed in line. The left of the brigade extended beyond the right front of Pack, whose four battalions, the 1st, 42nd, 92nd, and 44th, were posted on the reverse slope. On their left, but more advanced, and standing on the high ground above Papelotte, were Best's four battalions, three in line and one in reserve; and on their left was Vincke's Hanoverian brigade. Smohain, Papelotte, and La Haye were occupied by part of Perponcher's division, under Prince Bernhard of Saxe Weimar, with two battalions on the slope in reserve. Far away to the extreme left stretched the squadrons of Vandeleur and Vivian's brigades of light cavalry. Vandeleur's regiments were the 11th, 12th, and 16th Light Dragoons; Vivian's, the 10th and 18th Hussars and the 1st Hussars of the German Legion, all perfect light horsemen. Vivian's

patrols were pushed out towards Ohain, and his vedettes extended beyond Smohain towards the French position. Such was the first line. The whole front, from Hougoumont to Smohain, was covered by a line of sentries extended in skirmishing order. With the exception of Bylandt's and three battalions of Best's brigade the whole of the battalions of the first line were in quarter-distance column, at deploying intervals; but some, in the right and centre, notably those in the whole corps of the Prince of Orange, were posted in squares and oblongs, the supporting lines being opposite the intervals between the columns in their front.[1]

The second line consisted entirely of cavalry. On the right, in rear of the Guards and Colin Halkett, were the brigades of Sir Colquhoun Grant and Major-General Dörnberg. Grant commanded the 7th and 15th Hussars and the 13th Light Dragoons. Dörnberg had under him the 23rd Light Dragoons and the 1st regiment of the German Legion. Attached to the latter were those runaways, the Cumberland Hussars. On the left of Dörnberg, and somewhat farther to the rear, were the 3rd Hussars of the German Legion, under Colonel Von Arenschildt, of Peninsular renown. A mass of horsemen, the finest of the British heavy cavalry, stood on the right and left of the Charleroi road. Lord Edward Somerset, with the Household Brigade, the Life Guards, Blues, and the 1st Dragoon Guards, was on the right; and Sir William Ponsonby's, called the Union Brigade, because England furnished the 1st Royal Dragoons, Ireland the 6th Dragoons, or Inniskillings, and Scotland the 2nd Dragoons, or Scots Greys, was on the left. In rear of these powerful squadrons, on the westward of the farm of

[1] By Major Shaw, 43rd Foot, afterwards General Sir James Shaw Kennedy, who, in 1815, was Deputy-Quartermaster-General with the 3rd Division.

Mont St. Jean, were the Dutch-Belgian horsemen under Merle, Tripp, and Ghigny. It will be seen that the centre of the position was thus defended by three brigades of infantry, all staunch and tried, and five brigades of cavalry, two of which were among the best in the British service. A fine brigade of infantry, under Sir John Lambert, half of Sir Lowry Cole's division, had just arrived from Ghent: it was composed of the 27th, 40th, and 4th regiments, and it was halted near the farm of Mont St. Jean.

With the exception of the three brigades of Dutch cavalry, and Lambert's brigade, and a body of Nassau troops behind Alten's division, the whole of the reserves was on the west of the Nivelles road. The body of the reserve was the 2nd division, under Sir Henry Clinton. This was composed of a brigade of German Legionaries, commanded by Colonel du Plat; a Hanoverian brigade, under Colonel Hugh Halkett; and a British brigade, under Sir Frederick Adam, composed of the 52nd, 71st, the 2nd battalion and two companies of the 3rd battalion of the 95th Rifles. The Germans were in open column of companies in front; Adam's regiments were in column in rear; and Halkett was in front of Merbe Braine, in contiguous close columns of battalions. On the left of Halkett was the Brunswick division, now under Colonel Olferman. Far on the right Baron Chassé's Dutch-Belgian division occupied Braine l'Alleud, covered the right flank completely, and kept up the communication between the main army and Prince Frederick and General Colville at Tubize.

Part of the artillery was distributed along the ridge: on the right of the Charleroi road thirty guns, three foot and two horse batteries; on the left twenty-six guns, all foot artillery except one battery. There were

in reserve five foot and seven horse batteries, one being provided with a rocket apparatus. The reserve guns were with the reserve corps, and the whole were engaged during the day.

It has been said by Napoleon that Wellington violated all the rules of war in accepting battle with a defile through a forest in his rear. But to this it has been answered that not only did the forest and its outskirts afford fine positions for stopping an enemy, but that the roads in rear of Wellington were more numerous than those in rear of Napoleon. The French literally fought with a defile in the rear, and an extremely difficult defile —the town of Genappe. Between La Belle Alliance and this defile there was no position, whereas Wellington had, in the forest of Soignies, a ready made stronghold which must be carried and could not be turned, because he had upwards of 17,000 men near Hal. The left of the position, defended by a long line without infantry reserves, looked weak, but was really strong, because it was difficult to get at, the ascent being steep and open, and flanked by villages and enclosures, and the extreme left trending backwards towards Ohain, and the southern skirts of the forest being near. Any one standing at the base of the monument which records the names and services of the officers of the German Legion, and looking eastward up the valley, will easily understand how hard it would be to wrest that long ridge from a line of British and German troops.

By eight o'clock the British army was in position, but the brigades had not yet been ordered to stand to their arms, for the enemy was still invisible, and represented in front by his vedettes and sentries alone. Napoleon was at this moment breakfasting with his generals, and telling them that there were ninety chances in his favour,

and not ten against him; for, although one Englishman might be equal to one Frenchman, one Frenchman was equal to two Belgians or Germans. Ney is represented in the "Memoirs" of St. Helena as entering at this moment, and reporting that Wellington had not been simple enough to await his Majesty, and that the English were disappearing in the forest; and Napoleon, we are told, on the same authority, answered, with his usual self-confidence, "Vous avez mal vu; il n'est plus temps. Il s'exposerait à une perte certaine. Il a jeté les dés; et ils sont pour nous." [1] Soon afterwards Napoleon mounted his horse and rode forth to the high ground behind La Belle Alliance, whence he reconnoitred the position before him. All he could see was here and there a clump of red or a group in dark blue, and the general aspect of the position. He surveyed, also, the ground on his own side, and then dictated orders, which were carried immediately to the commanders of the corps. Then followed that grand theatrical display which has left so deep an impression upon all who witnessed it, even peasants, to this day, speaking of the scene as one of surpassing magnificence. Napoleon had determined not only to destroy Wellington, and through him the "British oligarchy," but to sacrifice him with due solemnity, exhibit him as a conspicuous example of the fate awaiting the other generals of the coalition, and raise France upon the ruins, grander and more powerful than ever. Filled with satisfaction at "the fault" committed by the general, whom he had designated as "un présomptueux, un téméraire, un ignorant," destined to suffer great catastrophes, Napoleon prepared for the combat with deliberation, and displayed before his intended victim

[1] Your eyes have deceived you. It is too late. He would expose himself to certain ruin. He has thrown the dice, and we win.

the formidable engines of his power. He indulged in the utmost luxury of the pomp and pride of war. He marshalled his host in parade order in full view of an admiring, but not, as he hoped, a terrified enemy. They keenly enjoyed a spectacle which made the heart beat with delight and set the eyes a-flame, and braced the nerves for action. Wellington saw it too, and gazed across the valley with that "firm countenance," that imperturbable expression which characterized him on the field of battle.

The orders of Napoleon put the whole French army in movement. Marching in eleven columns, they came up to the front and deployed with rapidity, precision, and fine scenic effect. The drums beat, the bands played, the trumpets sounded. The light troops in front pressed forward, and the rattle of musketry was followed by the retreat of our horsemen and foot soldiers. Light wreaths of smoke curled upwards into the misty air, and through this thin veil the dense dark columns of the French infantry and the gay and gleaming squadrons of French horse were seen moving into the positions assigned them by him who knew so well how to set "his battle in array." Before them was the open valley, yet green with the heavy crops; behind them dark fringes of wood, and a thick curtain of dreary cloud. Napoleon has described with great minuteness the preparations for his last battle. He dwells upon them with the complacency of an adjutant-general and the pride of a great conqueror. "La terre," he says, in a passage often quoted, "paraissait orgueilleuse de porter tant de braves."[1] The enemy, who beheld this magnificent spectacle, who could see every man, ought, he says, to have been struck by it,

[1] The very earth seemed proud to bear so many brave men.

for the army ought to have appeared to him doubly as strong as it really was. At ten o'clock they were all in position.

In front were the corps of D'Erlon and Reille; the infantry were ranged in two lines with an interval of seventy-five yards between each; the cavalry of the two corps in three lines on the flanks; Reille's artillery in front, D'Erlon's in the intervals of the brigades. On the extreme left, across the Nivelles road, stood the cavalry of Piré, with outposts towards Braine l'Alleud, opposed to the 15th Hussars. On the right of Piré's light cavalry were the infantry brigades, in succession, of Prince Jerome, Foy, and Bachelu, stretching from the Nivelles to the Brussels road, and curving round the wood of Hougoumont. D'Erlon was arrayed on the ridge which extends from La Belle Alliance to Frischermont, the infantry brigades of Donzelot, Allix,[1] Marcognet, and Durutte standing in succession from left to right; the cavalry of Jacquinot covering the right flank and opposing its vedettes to those of Vivian. In rear of D'Erlon were the cuirassiers of Milhaud and the light cavalry of the Guard, with artillery on the flanks and in the centre. In rear of Reille were the cuirassiers and dragoons of Kellerman, and the heavy horsemen of the Guard, with their guns drawn up in like array. In rear of the centre, Lobau's corps in close column of divisions was posted on the west of the Brussels road, one column in front of the other, with their artillery on the left flank. The light cavalry of this corps stood in close columns of squadrons on the eastern side of the road. Behind all, in front of Rossomme, and posted on both sides of the road in four broad and deep columns of battalions, with an im-

[1] Commanded by Quiot.

mense mass of artillery on both flanks and in the rear, stood the flower of the army and the glory of the Empire, the Infantry of the Imperial Guard.

Here were nearly 72,000 men, of whom 15,000 were cavalry, and 240 guns, displayed almost suddenly before their expectant foes; a mighty mass of fighting power, revealed as if by magic, in all the majesty of strength and the beauty of order, and trembling with eagerness to rush upon the enemy. Well may the picture dwell for ever in the minds of those who saw it, now, alas! but few.

Napoleon, attended by a glittering staff, rode along those lines of French fighting men, and their cries of delight reached the ears of the spectators on the ridge of Mont St. Jean, and in the wood of Hougoumont. It was Napoleon Bonaparte's last grand review.

CHAPTER X.

THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO.

§ 1. *Expectation.*

BETWEEN the review of the French army and the commencement of the battle there was yet an interval of repose. The two armies continued their preparations, and up to the last moment the British staff officers were engaged in completing the defensive arrangements. Napoleon represents himself as deterred from engaging by the state of the ground, still saturated with the heavy rain; but we agree with General Jomini, who is of opinion that Napoleon, confident that he had Wellington all to himself, under no apprehension of a flank attack from Blucher, was not unwilling to allow the ground to dry a little, and to give his troops some rest. Had he, at an early hour, divined the trap set for him, or had he obtained positive information of the approach of the Prussian army, he certainly would either have engaged Wellington at once, or have retreated from the field. It is inconceivable that he would have allowed himself, from any mere feeling of pride, to have been crushed between two armies. It was his sense of security more than the state of the ground, which made him deliberately defer the attack.

During this interval Napoleon reflected on and matured his plan of operations. The dense wood of Hougoumont,

and the visible strength of that side of the British position, appear to have made a deep impression on him. Moreover, he judged that even if he overcame this obstacle, and carried the heights above, Wellington's line of retreat and line of communication with Blucher would still have been intact. Here we see distinctly how completely Wellington appreciated the capabilities of the ground he occupied, and of what vast importance it was that Napoleon should not only be impressed with the strength of the British right, but that the British right should be really strong. Giving up the idea of assailing the right, Napoleon also rejected the idea of assailing the centre, because, being concave and flanked by Hougoumont and La Haye Sainte, it appeared to be too formidable. In like manner, examining the left, he was forced to admit that he could not turn it without making a wide, dangerous, and uncertain movement through very difficult ground. Hence he determined to attack simultaneously the left and centre, in the hope of forcing that part of the position, of driving Wellington violently upon his own right, and wresting from him the great road to Brussels and Antwerp. To effect this, he designed to employ the whole of D'Erlon's corps, and to support the onset by the whole corps of Lobau. As a diversion, Reille was to open the action by assailing Hougoumont. This was a fine plan, but Napoleon was deceived greatly by the weak appearance of the British left, and the rapid march of events soon compelled him to modify his plan, by depriving the attacking force of its supports.

While the French army was getting into position, the Duke of Wellington was engaged in surveying his own lines. He had been in the saddle from an early hour in the morning, riding that day his chestnut charger, Copenhagen, now almost as famous as the war-horse of the Cid. Feeling the full importance of the château of Hougoumont and

its enclosures, he rode thither, and, passing into the wood, remained some time at the point, on its eastern side, where the diagonal horse-path entered the open field, observing the dispositions of the French on that side. While here, according to an anecdote which Mr. Rogers has preserved, he remarked that the Nassau regiment was disposed to flinch from its forward position. "And when I remonstrated with them," he continues, "they said, in excuse, that the French were in such force near there. It was to no purpose that I pointed to our Guards on the right. It would not do; and so bewildered were they, that they sent a few shots after me as I rode off. 'And with these men,' I said, to the Corps Diplomatique, who were with me, 'and with these men I am to win the battle.' They shrugged their shoulders." Returning from Hougoumont, the Duke rode along the whole line, followed by the diplomatic gentlemen.[1] Colonel Charras somewhat theatrically tells us, that while the French soldiers welcomed Napoleon with "immense, with enthusiastic acclamations," no cry broke forth where Wellington rode along. But in this he is mistaken. The British troops and the Germain Legionaries knew the figure of the officer with a "firm countenance," who rode by on his chestnut horse, wearing a blue Spanish cape, white cravat, white buckskins, and plain cocked hat, and they cheered him as their comrades did when he rode alone up the hill at Sauroren; for no troops, not even those of Napoleon, ever placed more confidence in a chief than the British soldiers in the Duke of Wellington. During his progress along the left of the line he heard, probably from Vivian, that a Prussian officer had reached Smohain, and had informed Captain Taylor, of the 10th Hussars, who was on picket there, that

[1] There were many present: Baron Vincent, Count Pozzo di Borgo, General Alava, Baron Müffling, and Count Francisco de Sales.

Bulow was on the march with his whole corps, and that the advanced guard was then about two miles distant. Of course, this forward party, which brought such cheering intelligence, did not know that the fire in the streets of Wavre had seriously retarded the march of the main body of the corps. Soon after this the French broke into columns, and their skirmishers and vedettes moved to the front, compelling the British to fall back to the slope in front of their position. There was a brief interval of silence, after the British had stood to their arms. The Emperor took up his station on what the French writers call the "butte" of Rossomme, an elevated knoll, commanding a good view of the field, and there, at a table placed upon a mattress, abstracted from the farm, he sat facing the British lines, with a map unfolded before him. He had fixed upon one o'clock as the period when Ney should carry the British left and break into the centre. It was a quarter past eleven. From the hillock of Rossomme went an order to Reille to open the battle, by attacking the position in his front, in order to divert attention from the great stroke to be made on the other flank. This led to

§ 2. *The Attack on Hougoumont.*

Eager for the fray, Reille at once directed Jerome's division, commanded by Guilleminot, to assault the south-west angle of the wood, and Guilleminot immediately directed General Bauduin to advance with his brigade. The numerous skirmishers started forward down the slope, and the supporting columns followed in echelon, left in front. The French went on with spirit down the gentle declivity which led to the bottom, then full of water. They were not stopped by the fire of musketry which broke out from the

hedges enclosing the wood, but pressed on, returning the fire. At the same time Piré, on the left, directed the guns of his horse-batteries against the Anglo-Allied right. Captain Diggle, "a cool old officer of the Peninsula, took out his watch, turned to his subaltern officer, Gawler, who was of the same Peninsular mould, and (on hearing the first cannon shot) quietly remarked, 'There it goes.'" The hands of the watch marked twenty minutes past eleven. From this moment the cannonade continued to increase in intensity. The guns on the French left were answered by the batteries in front of Alten's and Cooke's divisions, which in the first instance were aimed at the columns supporting Bauduin's attack. Gradually battery after battery on both sides came into action, and soon the wide uproar swallowed up the ring of the musket and the rifle. The tall dense wood, garnished with a thick undergrowth, intercepted the French cannon shots, while the British batteries fired across the south-eastern angle of the open pastures, and down the valley on the west of Hougoumont, into the dark masses moving towards the wood. Shaken by the fire, deprived of their General, Bauduin, who was slain, of Jerome, who was wounded, the assailants made little progress; and the skirmishers were left to sustain the conflict. Again supported, they dashed forward, driving the Nassauers and Hanoverians before them through the underwood, across the open fields, and up the avenue on the west of the enclosures. The wood, and field, and lane were now full of Frenchmen. A large part of Guilleminot's thirteen battalions were forcing themselves through the thickets. They believed they had carried the position, and they shouted loudly as their spirits rose. Suddenly they were stopped. A thick hedge, forming the northern boundary of the wood, interposed, and between the stems of the hedge timber, and through the interlacing bushes, they

saw the bright red bricks of the southern wall of the garden. All at once the wall appeared aflame, and a hail of bullets crashed into the crowd behind the hedge, and madly trying to break through. The Guards in the garden, as a Frenchman writes, thus revealed their presence, and showed that the post was scarcely touched. The Duke of Wellington, at that moment on the right of the line, directed Colonel Frazer, commanding the horse artillery, to open a fire of shells upon the troops in the wood and field from Bull's howitzer horse-battery. This was a "delicate thing," as the Duke said, but it was done. "The troop commenced its fire, and in ten minutes the enemy was driven out of the wood." Startled by the bursting shells, shaken by the fire from the garden, the French gave ground, and the light companies of the Guards, dashing out of the orchard and down the avenue, and fighting their enemies as they fought them in the wood of Bossu, drove them back to the southern boundary. But again the French came on, now in greater numbers, for while Guilleminot attacked the south-western, Foy assailed the southern part of the position; and in spite of the sturdy resistance of the Guards, their numerous foes recovered the wood. The Guards fell back, one portion taking the western, the other the eastern, flank of the château and garden.

The cannonade had deepened along the line. Piré was engaged in a fierce duel with the British batteries on the right. The skirmishers were busy in the low grounds towards Papelotte, and under cover of their fire Ney was urging a mass of guns from the right wing forward through the stiff and watery soil to form a battery of nearly eighty pieces on the ridge which stretches from the Charleroi road, between La Belle Alliance and La Haye Sainte, to Papelotte.

Beyond this the action was still confined to the combat

for Hougoumont, which Napoleon hoped would induce Wellington to draw troops, or at least divert his attention wholly to that side. But in this he was mistaken. Wellington knew the mettle of the soldiers in charge of Hougoumont, and he could watch the ebb and flow of battle below him, and at the same time survey with cool glances the whole of the French line.

The renewed onslaught of two divisions upon Hougoumont carried part of the assailants once more up to the thick hedge, where they were again smitten by the fire of the Guards, delivered at short range, from the summit and the loopholes in the garden wall. But this time the French stood fast, some even creeping through, and vainly striving to mount the wall. Maddened by the obstacle, they next tried to enter the orchard by a gap in the hedge on their right; but here they were met by the bayonets of the companies under Lord Saltoun, and once more repulsed. During the time occupied in this encounter, another mass of Frenchmen had pushed forward on their left, outflanking the British companies on that side, and compelling them to hurry into the farm-yard by the northern entrance. The lane, the kitchen-garden, the ravine on the west of the walled enclosures, were now crowded with the enemy. One body fell upon the hastily barricaded gate—a trivial obstacle, which one looks at now with wonder, amazed how that weak gate and low wall could have resisted the splendid light troops of France. The sappers smashed in the timber, and the infantry followed; but crushed by a close volley, and charged with the bayonet, they were expelled, and the gate was closed by the strong arms of four officers and a sergeant of the Coldstream Guards.[1] A second body had pushed up the

[1] They were Lieutenant-Colonel Macdonnell, Captain Wyndham,

face of the steep hill, and, concealed by the corn, had half crippled a British battery. The Duke sent Colonel Woodford, with four companies of the Coldstream Guards, into the valley to counter-check this daring attack; and while Woodford drove the skirmishers before him, a third body of French had once more assailed the farm-yard gate. One, who had mounted on the cross-beam, was shot by Graham, and at this moment Woodford's men, scattering the skirmishers, dashed on with unhesitating steps, and swept away the whole mass who had congregated about the gate and in the avenue. Colonel Woodford led part of his soldiers into the château by a side door, and the rest lined the thick hedges in the avenue leading to the Nivelles road. On the left flank the combat had been also keen. The French, foiled in their attempt to carry the large orchard by passing the hedge, pushed a force up the outer side of the eastern enclosure, and thus outflanking Saltoun's Guards in the orchard, compelled them to give way, and dart backward from tree to tree until they gained the ditch which runs along the outside of the northern hedge. Here Saltoun's men could fire, resting their muskets on a level with the orchard. As the French broke into that enclosure they were struck by shots fired from the garden wall on their left flank, and from Saltoun's men in front. At the same time the Duke sent two companies of the Guards against the audacious fellows who had turned Saltoun, and these combined attacks once more forced the French out of the orchard. The British posts now extended along the orchard hedge and across the western avenue, leading to the Nivelles road. Thus Reille's diversion had led to considerable slaughter, but

Ensign Gooch, Ensign Hervey, and Sergeant Graham of the Coldstream Guards.

had not succeeded in deceiving the British commander, or in drawing a single man from the centre, the left, or the reserves. The Nassauers and Hanoverians were withdrawn, and the Guards were reinforced by six companies detached from the ridge. That was all; a small result, when we remember that Guilleminot and Foy had employed in these repeated onsets the greater part of twenty-two battalions, supported by Piré's batteries, which, firing from the Nivelles road, had done great execution on the British right.

Wellington had remained above Hougoumont during this fierce and prolonged combat, a mark for the enemy's shot. He had watched, directed, sustained the fight; but he had not neglected to observe the movements of his foe on the farther side of La Belle Alliance. He had seen Ney's great battery arrayed, gun after gun, on the commanding ridge in front of the British left, and he had noted the formation of columns of attack in rear of the battery. Hougoumont was safe, and the Duke now rode over to his left, and halted near a solitary tree which grew where the Wavre road intersects the road from Charleroi to Brussels, just above La Haye Sainte, a post of observation whence he could distinguish every movement of the French on that side. Ney's batteries had opened fire to shake the allied left, but the infantry did not come on. The reason of the delay will be speedily seen.

§ 3. *Approach of the Prussians.*

While he sat on the hill of Rossomme Napoleon had observed an irregular appearance in the north-east which aroused his suspicions. Something like troops in motion was visible on the heights of St. Lambert. Soult and the staff around him were consulted. Their answers showed

that they were divided in opinion. Some thought the Emperor deceived by the trees seen through the mist. Soult, according to Napoleon, answered promptly that the thing seen was a body of troops. Then came the perplexing question—what troops, were they French or Prussians; was it Blucher or Grouchy? Napoleon could hardly have believed that Grouchy was at St. Lambert, since he had received intelligence that Grouchy was that morning still at Gembloux, about to march upon Sart-lez-Walhain. Yet he must have been perplexed sorely, for the tenour of Grouchy's despatches had led him to believe that the Prussians were scattered on various points. To ascertain the truth, General Domont and General Subervię were sent towards the right with the whole or part of their light cavalry, and General Bernard, one of Napoleon's aides-de-camp, rode off for the purpose of approaching the strange troops as closely as might be prudent. The light horsemen moved away from the flank of Lobau's infantry and drew up opposite the wood of Paris, at right angles to the French line of battle. During the absence of Bernard, a Prussian hussar, the bearer of a letter from Bulow to Wellington, was brought in by a patrol. He had been caught on the road from Wavre to Planchenoit, and he reported that the troops seen on the heights of St. Lambert were the advanced guard of Bulow, and that the whole Prussian army was *en route* from Wavre to Mont St. Jean. He declared also that on the previous night there were no French troops within six miles of Wavre, a fact which Napoleon must have known to be stated accurately, for Grouchy had informed him that he was then at Gembloux. The appearance of the Prussians, the intelligence obtained from the hussar, induced Napoleon to send off at once fresh instructions to Grouchy. The Emperor again expressed his approval of the march upon Wavre, but at the same

time he warned his lieutenant, over and over again, that he must manœuvre in the direction of Planchenoit, telling him that he would thus catch Bulow *flagrante delicto*. Next came in reports from Domont, and Bernard galloped up and confirmed them. The Prussians were really arriving on the right flank of the French army. This was an anxious moment for Napoleon. Again he could not bring himself to adopt a bold and decided resolution. He instructed Lobau to cover the right flank; but he did not permit Lobau at that moment to march. Domont and Subervie alone faced the wood of Paris, within which were a body of Prussians, covering the march of Bulow's corps across the narrow and marshy defile of the Lasne. Thus Napoleon weakened the force at the disposal of Ney, by holding back Lobau, yet at the same time he did not send Lobau against the Prussians. It was long past noon. D'Erlon's corps, formed up in columns of attack by divisions, stood behind the smoke of the grand battery, protected by the fire hurled from it across the valley into the English position. The storm fell partly on the Belgians deployed below the ridge,[1] but the troops on the interior slope were comparatively sheltered from its fury. The skirmishers were contending about the hedges and ravines of Papelotte and La Haye, and along the valley between those farms and La Haye Sainte. Hougoumont, as we have seen, still resisted, but its blazing hayricks threw a ruddy gleam over the white smoke of the battle curling upwards above the tops of the tall trees. The guns along the crest of the British ridge answered the challenges of the adverse artillery, and, except at Hougoumont, the cannon formed the sole arm which either side could use. At this critical moment, while Napoleon was musing on

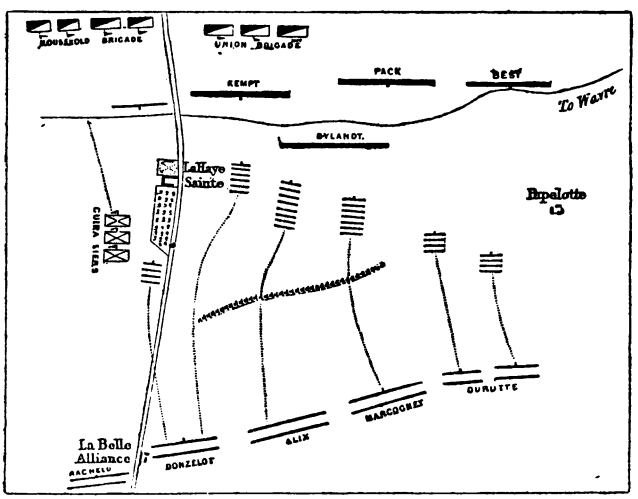
[1] One is at a loss to see why the Belgian troops were posted in this exposed position.

the apparition of the Prussians, Grouchy, aroused by the cannonade, was disputing with Gérard in the garden of the village functionary at Sart-lez-Walhain, twenty-two miles in a direct line from the scene of action; Ney was waiting eagerly for the signal to fall on; and Wellington was surveying calmly the French lines from his post above La Haye Sainte. At length the signal was given, and Ney commenced, between one o'clock and half-past.

§ 4. *The First Grand Attack.*

Ney had formed the corps of D'Erlon into four columns, left in front, immediately in rear of the grand battery. On horseback, in the Charleroi road, he gave the order to advance, and in succession the columns moved off from the left. They were composed of deep narrow masses, showing a front of about 150 or 200 men, and a depth of from twelve to twenty-four or twenty-seven ranks. Half the left column, flanked by a body of cuirassiers, was sent against La Haye Sainte, the other half moving up on the French right of the Charleroi road. There was a distance of about four hundred paces between the rear of the leading and the head of the following columns, and an interval of some width, but how much is not known. In this order they marched along, drums beating noisily, and the soldiers screaming out their war-cry. The two flanking-posts of La Haye Sainte and Papelotte narrowed the front, and to execute the movement Ney had been compelled to throw the right towards the centre. Another cause soon forced the left also to incline inwards, so that the tendency of the columns was towards the centre of the British left wing. As each column passed beyond the line of the grand battery, the guns, which were for a moment covered

by their progress, reopened fire, flinging their shot over the heads of the attacking force. The dark, dense, heavy masses moved slowly over the soft ground, and through the heavy crops, receiving as they passed the battery the fire of the British guns on the crest. It was a striking spectacle, which those who saw will never forget—the sort of parade movement of these columns into the valley,



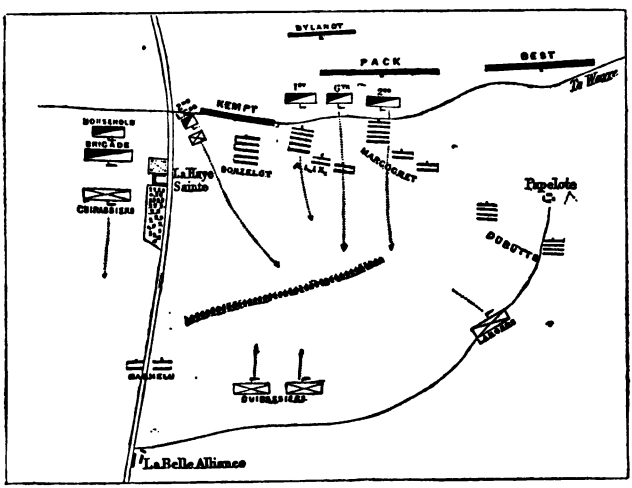
D'ERLON'S ATTACK ON THE BRITISH LEFT.

covered by the fire of their numerous artillery. The forces they were to fight were hardly to be seen, since the hedges along the Wavre road, and the slope in rear, screened them from view. Only the dark forms of the 95th, on the left, and the Belgians in the centre, and the light

cavalry on the right, were visible. The heroes of Quatre Bras were unseen.

The first shots were fired at La Haye Sainte, where one of Donzelot's brigades engaged in a tough encounter with Baring's Germans. The other brigade, in its compact order, kept steadily forward. It will be remembered that the knoll and gravel pit opposite the northern end of the farm, and the little hedge above it, were occupied by part of the 95th, and as soon as Donzelot's brigade came within range, the shots of the rifles, telling in their ranks, forced them to incline inwards, that is, to their right. The effect of this was to throw them upon the line of direction taken by Quiot's column, and to drive that column farther to its right, towards the column of Marcognet. The fire of the Rifles in front made Donzelot's men march more slowly; this diminished the distance, and the swerving to the right lessened the interval; and hence the second column under Quiot came into action almost as soon as the brigade on his left. Donzelot's brigade, although annoyed by the Rifles, continued its march, and, outflanking the 95th, caused them to quit the little hedge, and retire to the crest. While Quiot fell upon the wavering lines of the Dutch-Belgians, shook them and made them run, Donzelot's men, their left covered by skirmishers, dashed on, and shouting lustily, stormed upwards. But they were soon to be checked, charged, and beaten. Picton, keenly alive to the progress of the attack, had deployed the greater part of his two British brigades, mustering some 3,000 men; Kempt in front, a few yards behind the roadside hedges; Pack in his left rear, still farther withdrawn; while between them was a wide interval, which the fugitive Dutch-Belgians should have filled. As Donzelot's soldier's approached the hedges of the Wavre road, the French batteries ceased to play; the battle-cries of the assailants

were heard; the British skirmishers ran in; and Picton, who was with Kempt, brought the brigade up to the hedges. It was here that the French, attempting to deploy, were struck by a crashing volley, and saw, bursting through the smoke, Kempt's brigade coming on at the charge. The French began to fire, and seemed about to



REPULSE OF THE FRENCH.

gain some advantage, for the British were disordered somewhat in passing through the straggling hedges. A sharp and brief conflict ensued. Many fell, and among them the brave Picton himself. But the British bayonet prevailed, and the French column was put to flight. About the same time a mass of cavalry—cuirassiers followed by

the 2nd Life Guards, dashed in among the French flanking skirmishers, and whirled round to their right. A hand-to-hand cavalry combat ensued in the space between the left flank of Donzelot's broken column and the Charleroi road, while the 95th Rifles, rushing forward to their old position, plied the fugitives with shot, and captured men.

As Kempt came into collision with Donzelot and overcame him, Quiot, passing over part of the ground that had been occupied by the Dutch-Belgians, had reached the hedge, and Marcognet was climbing the crest a little in rear of his right. Both these latter divisions had been broken into two columns, the rear brigades having moved out to the right and formed in echelon in support. There was a wide gap before them. The sometime visible defenders of the position had fled in dismay. The French were already anticipating victory; they were really on the brink of destruction, for their worst foes, horsemen, were preparing to burst in upon them. The sole supports of Picton's division were the cavalry of the Union brigade. These regiments, under Sir William Ponsonby, had been moved to their left, and formed up two in line, and one, the Scots Greys, in support; and they were covered partially by the right regiments of Pack's brigade. Quiot's column had gone on over the Wavre road, raising its shrieks of victory above the din around; but here it halted suddenly, being brought up by the fire of a body of infantry. It was the left wing of the 28th Regiment, which, seeing an enemy, had been wheeled into a position enabling it to fire into the left flank of Quiot's division. At the same moment the 1st Royals, the right regiment of Ponsonby's brigade, crashed into the head of the French column, and, spurring home, broke it speedily into fragments. Then the Inniskillings, on the left of the Royals,

charging headlong down the slope, fell upon Quiot's rear brigade, which had been moved out to the right, in support, and inflicting severe punishment, sent it flying helplessly towards the rear. Marcognet's column, the third in echelon from the French left, was also now caught in the tempest. These gallant fellows had crossed the ridge near Rettberg's battery, which stood in front of the knoll, and had formed on the plateau, when Pack's Scotch regiments in their front assailed them with a concentrated fire. Then the infantry were seen to wheel backwards, the exciting notes of the bagpipe were heard, cries of "Scotland for ever!" arose, and the Greys, trotting by threes through the intervals, formed afresh, and charged by successive squadrons into the unsteady mass of Marcognet's devoted soldiers. Horsemen and infantry now whirled down the slope, followed by the Highland regiments, who secured the prisoners. On the extreme British left, the Hanoverian infantry had been menaced only by Durutte, who, partly occupied by Papelotte and La Haye, did not venture to ascend far up the slope, but, being the last to move, hung about the great battery, and afforded Marcognet some flanking protection from Best, Vincke, and the British light cavalry, whose squadrons were visible to him.

The whole space between Papelotte and La Haye Sainte was now covered with a shouting and fighting crowd of horse and foot; for there had been a sharp cavalry combat on the west of the Charleroi road, and the horsemen had swept over it and mingled in the mad strife on the east. Ney, it will be remembered, had supported Donzelot's attack upon La Haye Sainte, by sending forward a strong body of cuirassiers, and bringing Bachelu's division up to a point midway between La Belle Alliance and the British ridge, where, for a short distance, the road passes between

high banks. The cuirassiers trotted across the valley in high spirits, overthrew a Hanoverian regiment sent to reinforce La Haye Sainte, and heedless of the fire of cannon and musketry from Alten's squares, crossed the ridge and reached the Wavre road. The Earl of Uxbridge had already prepared a reception for them. Keeping the Blues in support, he led the Life Guards and 1st Dragoon Guards against that iron-plated cavalry with which Napoleon had seized many a position. The conflict was of short duration.[1] The shock began on the French left, where the Wavre road was on a level with the plateau, and the British regiments, being formed with their right shoulders rather forward, came up in succession. The cuirassiers were outflanked on their left; assaulted boldly, in spite of their armour they were made to yield, and were followed down the slope and across the valley. Their right, arrested by the hollow way, at the bottom of which ran the Wavre road, after they had stumbled down and up the banks, were charged by the 2nd Life Guards. The French broke away to their right, thinking to escape down the Charleroi road, but, stopped by the abattis, they crossed the road, as we have recorded already, and appeared unexpectedly, pursued hotly by the 2nd Life Guards, in the midst of the skirmishers of Donzelot's brigade, then flying before Kempt. As they crossed the Charleroi road a round shot from La Belle Alliance bounded up the pavé, and struck the mass; in a moment horses and men were writhing in the wildest con-

[1] "I believe this to have been the only fairly tested fight of cavalry against cavalry during the day. It was a fair meeting of two bodies of heavy cavalry, each in perfect order. The subsequent attacks were either those of heavy cavalry against heavy cavalry that had been previously wrecked upon squares of infantry, or contests between light and heavy cavalry."—SHAW KENNEDY.

fusion. Some stumbled also into the gravel pit, where a cuirassier and a Life Guardsman, on foot, wrestled together with deadly tenacity.[1] Scattering their foes, the Life Guards swept furiously across the valley, and by the time the wreck of the infantry columns, dispersed by Picton and Ponsonby, were struggling to the rear, the French hill, whereon stood the great battery, presented a bewildering spectacle. "Raging like a cloud of locusts,"[2] were seen Ponsonby's dragoons, who had charged straight to their front, the 2nd Life Guards, who had pushed diagonally across the road, and part of the King's Dragoon Guards, who had ridden recklessly over the road to the south of La Haye Sainte. In the valley isolated horsemen were engaged in single combats, and the British infantry were gathering up the prisoners. Vivian and Vandeleur were in motion, moving up from the left. Merle's Dutch-Belgian cavalry had advanced from the reserve to the brow. Bachelu's infantry, from the banks of the high road, had stopped the 1st Life Guards and part of the King's Dragoon Guards, who retired, covered by the Blues. Under these circumstances, seeing their line of guns in possession of the British horsemen, seeing their infantry utterly disordered, three regiments, from Jaquinot and Milhaud's cavalry, were moved up tardily to the rescue.

Jacquinot's lancers, in open lancer order, fell diagonally upon the left of the British troopers, while Milhaud's two regiments of cuirassiers, sent by Napoleon himself, took them full in front. With wearied arms, and blown horses, the audacious dragoons turned at the sight of the fluttering pennons of Jacquinot, and strove to regain the British

[1] The Guardsman, George Gerrard, killed his enemy.
[2] Heymés.

position, but some remained to fight, and many were overthrown and killed, both of those flying and those fighting. It is a source of immense satisfaction to the French writers that their cavalry were able to cut up a flock of exhausted British horsemen fighting without concert. The lancers and cuirassiers pursued them down into the valley, spearing and sabring the fugitives, and even sticking the wounded. But help was at hand. Vandeleur, a brave but cautious officer, had brought his brigade to the crest, by passing through the Hanoverian regiments of Best and Vincke. The 12th Light Dragoons in column, followed by the 16th, also in column, were sent down the slope, while the 11th remained on the ridge in support. The 12th, in its progress, lost a few men from the fire of the men of Durutte's left brigade occupying the Papelotte hedgerows. On arriving near the bottom of the valley they wheeled into line to their right, broke through Marcognet's supporting column of infantry, and, seeing the French lancers slaying the heavy dragoons, charged them in flank. At the same time Vandeleur, who had wheeled the 16th into line, charged down across the slope, and fell obliquely upon the French. This completely stopped them, and compelled them to re-ascend their own side of the valley. Vandeleur, having fulfilled his task, retired. Ghigny had brought up his Dutch-Belgian brigade, and had lost some men from the French on the west of Papelotte. Vivian had arrived with the 10th and 18th Hussars, but finding them not needed, he directed them to a position in rear of Best.

Thus the grand attack on the British left had completely failed. The French writers have been at great pains to explain that the rout resulted from an error in tactics—namely, the error of forming whole divisions into dense columns on the narrow front of the leading battalion. That may be so, yet we must remember, if it were so, that it

was Ney who formed these columns, and that Napoleon was near enough to remedy any mistake. The real error, as competent critics declare, was the neglect to support the infantry with cavalry.

However that may be, Napoleon learned at last the strength of the British left, and respected it for the remainder of the day.

In this complicated and brilliant fight many deeds of conspicuous valour were performed, and some have been recorded. The overpowering charge of the Life Guards, unequally matched, in appearance, with the cuirassiers, clad in mail and armed with long sabres, is one of the brightest incidents in the cavalry attack. The French writers speak of the *gaieté de cœur* with which the cuirassiers dashed at our dragoons, sticking them in the back, and laughing as they did so; but they forget to add that the men thus stabbed with the long swords were the exhausted soldiers in retreat. Braver cavalry never smote an enemy than the French, but in this fight of horsemen they met with more than their equals, not in mere dashing bravery, but in bottom, weight, sword-play, and horsemanship. The fault of the British dragoons was that they ran away—towards the enemy; a fault in discipline only second to that of running away from the enemy. It was never intended that broken squadrons of dragoons should charge an army in position; a fact the British trooper will not, or cannot, understand.

During the triumphant rush of the Union Brigade into the French infantry, two eagles were captured. Captain Clarke, of the Royals, with his squadron, swept in upon the guard of the eagle of the 105th, and although it was bravely defended, he slew the officer who bore it, and as it fell a corporal caught it and bore it to the rear. In the column assailed by the Greys was the 45th, a gallant regi-

ment styled the "Invincibles." Sergeant Ewart, of the Greys, charged the standard, by main valour and skill wrested it from the men who guarded the symbol of military honour, and bore it to Brussels.[1]

The result of the grand attack was the loss to the French of two eagles, 3,000 prisoners, and 2,000 or 3,000 killed and wounded. D'Erlon's corps, it is admitted, was diminished by one-third, and compelled to withdraw to its original position to re-form. None of it, except the left divisions, did much during the rest of the day. Nor was this all: the force of the grand battery was diminished; for many pieces which had been pushed in advance when the infantry charged were utterly disabled by the wild dragoons. On the British side the loss in cavalry was very serious; the loss in officers great and mournful. Not only did Picton, at the head of Kempt's soldiers, fall dead as he was cheering them on; Sir William Ponsonby, who had vainly tried to restrain his furious troopers, was stabbed to death by the lancers; Colonel Fuller, of the King's Dragoon Guards, was killed in the grand battery; Colonel Hamilton, of the Scots Greys, seems to have shared the impetuosity of his men, for he was lost to view careering towards the French lines; Shaw, the renowned Life Guardsman, after display-

[1] THE CAPTURE OF THE EAGLE.—Sergeant Ewart has left a written sketch of his combat for the eagle. "It was in the first charge," he writes, "that I took the eagle from the enemy. He and I had a hard contest for it. He thrust for my groin; I parried it off, and cut him through the head. After which I was attacked by one of their lancers, who threw his lance at me, but missed the mark by my throwing it off with my sword by my right side. [We cannot account for the appearance of a lancer at this stage of the fight.] Then I cut him from the chin upwards, which went through his teeth. Next I was attacked by a foot soldier, who, after firing at me, charged me with his bayonet—but he very soon lost the combat, for I parried it, and cut him down through the head. So that finished the contest for the eagle."

ing antique valour, was killed in this fight; Colonel Frederick Ponsonby, of the 12th Light Dragoons, disabled in both arms, was carried by his horse into the French position, wounded and left for dead, stabbed by a lancer who perceived a sign of life in the fallen officer;[1] wounded, ridden over, yet not killed; his life was saved by momentary help from a French officer, and he long survived the battle.

§ 5. *Progress of the Fight.*

The losses suffered by the British rendered it desirable that the left centre should be reinforced. This was partly effected by drawing the infantry closer together. Pack closed upon Kempt, Best followed Pack, and Vincke Best. Bylandt's Belgians, who had fled from the French, reformed, and stood in rear of Pack. Vivian remained in rear of the new ground forming the extreme left, and Vandeleur occupied a position on the right of Vivian. Sir John Lambert's brigade had advanced when Ponsonby moved to the front, and it was directed to remain in the forward position behind Kempt. The wreck of the Union Brigade retired to re-form in rear of the left centre. At the same time, the 95th recovered and held its first position on the knoll and in the sandpit opposite the northern end of La Haye Sainte; and two fresh companies of Germans

[1] Not that the French were wanting in noble chivalric feelings. A trumpeter boy of the 2nd Life Guards, Thomas Beamond, was riding through the field when a cuirassier rushed at him with his sword's point levelled at the boy's breast. Discovering that he was a mere lad, the gallant Frenchman dropped his point, spared him, and passed on. Sad to relate, in sight of the poor boy, a comrade, who had not witnessed the noble act of the cuirassier, fell upon him and slew him. When the boy, grown a man, told the story to my informant, he was, even after years had passed by, affected even to tears.

were thrown into that farm. Wellington judged rightly that he would have nothing to fear in future for his left, while at the same time he foresaw that Napoleon would assail his centre; yet no proper arrangements had been made for the defence of the farmstead.[1]

During the conflict on the left the French had once more striven to seize Hougoumont. Foy had struck into the fight, and Foy, as well as Prince Jerome, who nominally commanded Guilleminot's division, had retired wounded from the field. The French did not spare themselves. They renewed the combat again and again, with equal fury. The result was always the same. A fierce rush into the orchard was followed by the retreat of the Guards to the hollow way along the northern boundary. Then a storm of shot broke into the front and flank of the assailants from the hedge and the garden wall. When the French were shaken, the Guards dashed through the gap in the hedge and chased their foes out of the orchard, pouring their fire into the mob who rushed to the gap in the opposite hedge. Some of the French vainly tried, by firing at the southern orchard wall through the hedge, to frighten away the defenders. Others rushed down the western path to meet death from the muskets of the troops in the avenue and the brushwood covering the slope on the right of the British position. The English writers record an attempt made by Bachelu to fall upon the eastern flank of Hougoumont by marching his division in one body across the open space between the Charleroi road and the farm. They also tell how it was frustrated by the fire of Captain Cleeves's battery, standing on a commanding point of the British ridge. But the French writers are silent on this head.

[1] "The proposals for strengthening the place on the morning of the 18th were repudiated by the head-quarters staff."—SHAW KENNEDY.

Along the whole front the skirmishers were once more deeply engaged, and the roar of the artillery never ceased for a moment.

Repulsed on his right, menaced on the same flank by the Prussians, Napoleon did not despair of success, but modified his plan of action, and prepared to carry it into execution. At this time, between two and three, he had employed the whole of the infantry of the 1st and 2nd corps. Guilleminot, Foy, Donzelot, Quiot, Marcognet, had suffered immense losses. Durutte and Bachelu alone had sustained comparatively light punishment, but the signal repulse of their comrades had somewhat impaired their *moral*. Lobau's corps was intact; but as Bulow was known to be in the wood of Paris, Napoleon held Lobau in reserve, to act on that side. There remained the Imperial Guard and the cavalry; the former had not fired a shot, the latter had only sent a few regiments to the front. It was with the Guard and the cavalry, and the shattered infantry of the line, that Napoleon, if he won, must win. About this time Lobau moved off to the right, and took up a position west of the wood of Paris—his right towards the Lasne in front of Planchenoit, and his left towards Frischermont at right angles to the main line of battle. The Imperial Guard, quitting Rossomme, moved up to occupy the ground vacated by Lobau. Their grand masses of battalions, in columns, stood on both sides of the road.

Napoleon now prepared for a fresh onset. He had determined to force the British centre. New batteries, partly drawn from the right and partly from the Imperial Guard, were formed to pound the British line above La Haye Sainte and along its whole extent, as far as the extreme right. Bachelu drew towards the right of Foy, leaving a wide interval between his own right and La Belle Alliance, an interval occupied by Kellerman's

squadrons. Piré was directed to menace the British right on the Nivelles road, in order that Wellington might be induced to weaken his centre by detaching to his right. Wellington contented himself with sending two regiments of light horse under Sir Colquhoun Grant to watch the Frenchmen. He had no need to send infantry, for Chassé was still at Braine l'Alleud, Halkett at Merbe Braine, and Lord Hill on the Nivelles road. It was part of the plan that Piré should shell the château and farm of Hougoumont from the slope of the hill on the west, and that Donzelot and Quiot should furnish troops to carry La Haye Sainte. The trees were so thick about Hougoumont, especially on the western side, that the French could neither see nor fire into the place. The stout boles in the hedges, growing closely together, intercepted the cannon shot; not more than four or five struck the outer walls all day. But the shells soon set the buildings on fire, consuming the château and part of the outhouses, and destroying the wounded who had been carried thither for shelter. The huge clouds of smoke, springing from a mass of flame, were wafted by a light south-westerly wind across the valley towards the British position. But neither the flames in their rear, nor the hail of shot in their front, shook the constancy of the defenders. As he saw the flames mount upward, Colonel Frazer, commanding the horse artillery, took out his watch to mark the time—it was a quarter to three.

As the demonstration made by Piré and the bombardment of Hougoumont were part of the same plan, we infer that it was about this period that the attack on La Haye Sainte was renewed. The first attack upon this farm took place, as already stated, when D'Erlon assaulted the British left. Donzelot's left brigade carried the orchard, and even seized the garden, but could not retain this ad-

vanced position when the bulk of D'Erlon's corps was routed from the field. The fresh attack was made by a combined body of Donzelot and Quiot's divisions. Although severely damaged in the previous fight, they returned to the charge with undiminished vigour and courage. Major Baring had drawn in his men from the orchard, and now held the farmstead. But the ammunition of his men was nearly exhausted. All his efforts to obtain a supply failed.[1] The western door of the barn had been burned for fuel on the previous evening, and now gaped wide open to admit the enemy. The French infantry, supported by cavalry on the left, advanced in two columns, one on the eastern and the other on the western side. Gallant men among them, axe in hand, strove to break in the great barn door facing the Charleroi road, but it resisted all their efforts. Others sought to carry the gateway

[1] "Much has been said of Baring's having sent repeatedly for ammunition, and that none was sent him. The matter had been certainly grossly mismanaged. The arrangements for the brigades getting their spare ammunition was, that each brigade should communicate with the guard over the ammunition, and order forward what was wanted. How the brigade failed to do this has not been explained, as so many of its superior officers fell in the action. Baring could not account for it, which I know from our having slept together on the ground close to the Wellington Tree on the night after the action, when he mentioned his having sent more than once for a supply of ammunition, and his having received no answer. The unexplained want of ammunition by Baring's battalion is placed in an extraordinary view when it is considered that the battle of Waterloo lasted eight hours and a half, and that all the three brigades of the division got the ammunition they required, with the exception of this one battalion. The simple fact of Baring's applications for spare ammunition having been made by him late in the day, when, owing to the enemy's position, there could be no certainty of its being got into the place, proves an extraordinary oversight. The spare ammunition should have been sent for early in the morning."—SHAW KENNEDY.

on the opposite side; before they could cross the threshold they were shot down by the defenders. Beaten off, they fell back to the orchard, and thence renewed the attack, when similar incidents occurred repeatedly. Twice they were compelled to draw off; twice they set the buildings on fire, and the fire was as often extinguished by the courageous Germans. Baring had been twice reinforced; but his men fell fast, his ammunition grew scarcer with every shot. Further succours sent from above were cut off by the French cavalry. Yet the Germans, with admirable devotion, were steadfast to their officers, although they saw no prospect of victory; for the French grew bolder as the fire of their enemies slackened. They broke through a house door, leading by a narrow passage into the court-yard, yet could not make good their entrance. Then they climbed on to the roofs, and fired down upon the defenders. Resistance was no longer possible. The garrison had done all that men in their position, quite cut off from the army, and overwhelmed by numbers, could do; and the shouts of the French loudly proclaimed that they had won the farm. It was dearly won and dearly lost. A mere handful of Germans returned alive to the ridge, the rest were a sacrifice to duty and military honour.[1]

The French had gained a great advantage, but at a great cost. They were unable to make immediate and powerful

[1] Major Baring, it is but just to say, contends that he did not quit the farm until after six o'clock. Sir James Shaw Kennedy, who was in the centre, also says distinctly six o'clock. Captain Siborne has adopted the same view. The Duke of Wellington said that La Haye Sainte was taken about two, Napoleon at three, and other writers later. Charras, on the authority of an officer present, fixes the period of the capture at a little before four; it was probably taken a little after. The grand cavalry attacks may have been begun a little before the farmstead was cleared, but it is very doubtful.

use of it because their infantry had been so severely shaken and ravaged in their encounters with the British. Even at this early period, Napoleon had no reserves except the Imperial Guard, and as Bulow was now coming into action on the hills above Planchenoit, it became a matter of nice calculation whether the corps of Lobau would be strong enough to keep them in check without aid from the Imperial Guard. For any attack on the centre from La Haye Sainte, Napoleon could rely only on Donzelot and Quiot. Bachelu, who had not been seriously touched in this deadly strife, had closed upon the right of Foy to sustain the attack on Hougoumont. For these reasons, Ney, when he had got La Haye Sainte, could not support his cavalry attack with infantry.[1] He could only hold the post, esta-

[1] Whether it occurred before or after six o'clock, the capture of La Haye Sainte was followed by a moment of great danger. Major Shaw, as he then was, not knowing then, as so many had fallen, who was the senior officer of the 3rd Division, and being himself the staff-officer present, galloped to the Duke who was near the Guards, "and informed him that his line was open for the whole space between Halkett's and Kempt's brigades. This very startling information he received with a degree of coolness and replied to in an instant with such precision and energy, as to prove the most complete self-possession; and left on my mind," Sir James adds, "the impression that his Grace's mind remained perfectly calm during every phase, however serious, of the action; that he felt confident of his own powers of being able to guide the storm which raged around him; and from the determined manner in which he then spoke, it was evident that he had resolved to defend to the last extremity every inch of the position which he then held. His Grace's answer to my representation was in the following words, or nearly so:—'I shall order the Brunswick troops to the spot, and other troops besides; go you and get all the German troops of the division to the spot that you can, and all the guns that you can find.' . . . He not only ordered the Brunswick troops there, but put himself at their head. . . . In no other part of the action was the Duke of Wellington exposed to so much personal risk as on this occasion, as he was successively under a close and most destructive infantry fire at a very short distance."

blish himself solidly in it, and by occupying the knoll and sandpit across the road, and gradually creeping up the steep banks of the road itself, send a searching fire into the very heart of the centre. And this he accomplished during the period we are about to describe, when, the infantry being exhausted, the main battle was continued by another arm.

§ 6. *Grand Attacks of Cavalry.*

The front of the Allies' position, as seen from La Belle Alliance, presented the strange spectacle of a line of batteries apparently unsupported by infantry or cavalry. On the British right, the conflict extended down the slope, into and about the orchard and buildings of Hougoumont. Thence to the Charleroi road nothing was visible, except the smoke and fire of the artillery, and the shadowy forms of the gunners working their pieces with steadfast energy. Above La Haye Sainte, and on both sides of the road, and thence along the valley to Papelotte, La Haye, and Smohain, the skirmishers of both armies were contending actively and fiercely; and over them, from opposing heights, flew the iron sleet propelled from hostile batteries. On the west of the Charleroi road, and from high ground near La Belle Alliance, the French artillery poured shot and shell into the inferior force of guns opposed to it, and over them into the allied infantry, lying in squares on the interior slope, between the angle of the Nivelles and Charleroi roads. Byng's brigade of Guards having been absorbed in the defence of Hougoumont, the Duke had supplied their place in the front line by Brunswick battalions, who were posted between Maitland and Halkett. The 23rd British Regiment of Foot, of Mitchell's brigade, was moved to the left into the front line, and planted amid

the Brunswick squares. The infantry, from the Charleroi road to the right, had been judiciously posted in alternate columns, so that each supported the other; and in rear of all stood the cavalry. Wellington still had in reserve the divisions of Chassé and Clinton on the right, Lambert's British brigade in the centre, and the light cavalry of Vivian and Vandeleur on the left. He was overmatched in cannon; his horsemen were not to be compared in number with those of Napoleon; but he held in his hand more disposable infantry than his adversary, and upon the toughness of these he justly relied.

The moment of peril was close at hand. Unwilling, indeed unable, to follow up the capture of La Haye Sainte by a combined attack of infantry and cavalry on the British centre, Napoleon ordered Ney to attack with cavalry alone. The cavalry of the right wing were selected for this purpose. Whereupon Milhaud led his shining squadrons into the low grounds on the south of La Haye Sainte, and Lefebvre Desnouettes followed with the light cavalry of the Guard. There were twenty-one squadrons of cuirassiers, seven squadrons of lancers, and twelve squadrons of chasseurs. They were formed in columns of attack, and presented a brilliant and imposing mass, armed with long sabres or longer lances; all were clad in rich uniforms—the cuirassiers in polished steel, the lancers in red, the chasseurs in green and gold. They were five thousand strong, and filled the open space between the Charleroi road and the inclosures of Hougoumont. With these formidable warriors Ney was to break, and with nearly an equal number in reserve to rout, the soldiers of Wellington.

As they came within the line of fire, the allied batteries assailed them; but they were not to be stopped by artillery. Ney led forward the cuirassiers through the iron

shower, and, at a trot, climbed with them the sodden slope. Warned by the previous failure, he directed his squadrons diagonally to the left from La Haye Sainte, in order to avoid the hollow way formed by the Wavre road. Undisturbed by the grape which rattled on their corslets, the cuirassiers continued their career. The artillerymen fled to the squares, the French horsemen shouted when they beheld the guns in their possession, and then went at the infantry. Full of fire and audacity, confident in their steel jackets, but without the velocity requisite to break so compact a formation, they rode at their grim and silent enemies. The faintest irresolution among the British foot soldiers and they were lost; but none were irresolute. The cuirassiers dashed at a square and received its fire. Horses stumbled and fell, saddles were emptied, files broke off or bounded backwards to fall under the fire of another square. It was a confused combat, which defies analysis and eludes imagination. Regiments, squadrons, troops, soon lost their unity, but the infantry formations remained entire and unshaken. The mailed horsemen rode around them, a confused and jostling crowd, and at the right moment the allied cavalry poured through the intervals of the squares, fell upon the disordered crowd, and drove them down the hillside. The gunners rushed to their pieces, which, by strange neglect, the French had not spiked; but they had hardly begun to fire, when Lefebvre Desnouettes came up the slope at a quicker pace, followed by the angry cuirassiers, who had rapidly re-formed, and then the wild and exciting combat was renewed. More wary in this second attack, the French generals kept a portion of their horsemen in hand, as a security against the allied cavalry, while the remainder sought vainly to destroy the living fortresses, whose fires crossed, whose bayonets were immovable. Once more the serried squadrons were broken

into groups; once more the steady file-firing strewed the ground with the dead and dying; once more the allied cavalry, in close order, dashed into the midst of the scattered horsemen; and again they were driven down into the valley. Here, trembling with rage at their defeat, still partially under fire from the allied batteries, exhausted, frustrated, but not conquered, they readily re-formed, while their batteries renewed that terrible cannonade, far more destructive than the thundering onset of the French horse.

Ney was a captain who grew more resolute amidst disaster. He was more than fearless in battle, he was morally unconquerable; and never had he shown more constancy than he displayed at Waterloo. Defeated in two attempts, he called upon the soldiers of Milhaud and Lefebvre Desnouettes to follow him once more. Willingly they obeyed his summons to a combat over ground red with the blood of their comrades, and tried once more to move that sturdy infantry. Nor was Ney content with the remains of the two divisions with which he had hitherto fought. He called up General Guyot's grenadiers and dragoons of the Guard, and at the same moment Napoleon ordered forward the cuirassiers of Kellerman, in all four or five thousand fresh sabres.[1] Except the brigades of Piré, every horseman in the French army was now flung into the battle—in the centre, Milhaud, Lefebvre Desnouettes, Kellerman, Guyot; on the right, Jacquinot, Subervie, Domont; not a lance or a sabre remained. The torrent of cavalry rolled in agitated waves across the valley, and in a brief space spread out over the battle-field behind the crest of the ridge held by the Allies. It was at this moment that Grant brought back his two regi-

[1] See Plan IV.

ments from the right, arriving just in time to dispute the ground with the extreme left of the French horse. The masses of hostile cavalry came on in succession, and raged over the plateau. They behaved with conspicuous bravery, but, although they charged at the squares, approached, cut at the bayonets with their sabres, and thrust at the front files with their lances, it is recorded that they did not in any case charge home. The squares beat them off, slew them, killed their horses, and threw them again into confusion. No scene like this is recorded in the annals of war. At length, when their arms were tired and their horses blown, and their masses confused, the allied cavalry, for the third or fourth time, swept over the field and relieved the enduring infantry from the pressure of their swarming foes. In these fruitless onsets one-third of the French cavalry had been destroyed.

Upon other points there was no pause in the shock of battle. The fighting men of both armies surged to and fro in the Hougoumont enclosures, both in the great orchard and on the western side of the château. The French in La Haye Sainte had grown adventurous, forming strong groups of skirmishers on both sides of the road in advance of the farm. A brisk interchange of fire went on in the valley, dipping down in front of the British left, and Durutte kept up a sustained combat with Prince Bernhard for the possession of Papelotte and La Haye. Bulow's Prussians had come into action between Frischermont and the Lasne, and every moment their increasing force told upon the numerically inferior divisions of Lobau. The French had not lost, but they had not won the battle. There were still three hours more of daylight, a brief interval, which included within itself the fortunes of Napoleon and Europe. Ney had tested the strength of the allied line, first with infantry alone, and then with

cavalry alone. That line had withstood both tests. By a combination of the two arms, the first had recoiled upon Ney himself; in the application of the second, an infantry of unparalleled constancy had broken up a mighty throng of horsemen, and the allied cavalry had completed their defeat. For nearly an hour the bands of furious horse had ridden, but not with impunity, through and through the allied lines, had searched every part between the angle of the two paved roads, and had found no weak place, had captured no single British trophy. It was a contest between bravery and stout-heartedness, between glory and duty, and duty and stout-heartedness prevailed.

The beaten cavalry retired to the hollows at the foot of the allied right centre, but no farther. Here, somewhat sheltered from the fire of the allied guns, which, by recoiling into the deep soil, had lost their true elevation, and protected by a heavy cannonade resumed by the French batteries, when their cavalry rolled down the slope, they sought to re-form their confused squadrons, and make ready for fresh exertions. The French line now extended northward from the hills east of Planchenoit to the hedges of Smohain, thence along the valley westward to La Haye Sainte, and, from that point, in a backward diagonal direction towards the Hougoumont inclosures; and thence through the wood in a westerly line to the Nivelles road.

The British line had been contracted, and the front reinforced, during the thick of the cavalry charges. Chassé's division was on the march from Braine l'Alleud, covered by the 2nd Light Dragoons of the German Legion. The front line of artillery on the right centre had been strengthened. Coming rapidly into action, one battery, covered by a bank, fired into a body of cuirassiers at thirty paces, and utterly routed them. Lord Hill had moved up Du Plat's brigade of German Legionaries, who, on the

march, encountered and repulsed a body of French cavalry, and then took post near to the hedge of the orchard of Hougoumont. In left rear of these, but behind the crest, were part of the Brunswick infantry. So keen were the French, cheered greatly by the presence of cavalry, that their skirmishers pressed up the slope on the left flank of Du Plat, and their fire became so biting, that the Duke, then near, directed Adam's brigade to "drive those fellows away." This was speedily accomplished, and the brigade, marching on, went down the slope and formed between the right of Maitland's guards and the north-eastern angle of the orchard; the 71st, and two companies of the 95th, on the right, the 52nd in squares of wings in the centre, and the 2nd battalion of the 95th on the left. Here they withstood several charges. It was the bold advance of these regiments, during the heat of the cavalry attack, that compelled the French horse to throw back their left; and the strong line formed by Adam was a bar to the advance of the French on that side. As part of the movement to reinforce the front line, Halkett's Hanoverians came up from Merbe Braine, and occupied a position on the outer slope of the ridge, in rear of Du Plat. The right had thus closed towards the centre, and the left had also closed towards the same point. Lambert had brought his three regiments closer to the front line on the east of the Charleroi road, to support Kempt and Ompteda. Pack's brigade, except the 1st Royals, who filled the interval between Kempt and Best, stood between Lambert and Kempt, and Vincke's four battalions of Hanoverians were on both sides of the road, near the farm of Mont St. Jean. Bylandt remained in rear of Best; only a gallant few of his troops, under a brave old soldier, fought in front line with the 1st regiment.

Firmly as the British line had stood the charges of 10,000 horsemen, yet it had suffered severely in officers, and men, and guns. The squares had been advanced to receive the cavalry; they were now withdrawn below the ridge, to shelter the men from the cannonade. Now they were to be more severely tried. Ney, driven into the valley, was still eager to win, and he sent Colonel Heymès to Napoleon to ask for infantry with which to sustain the battle. Napoleon's answer was abrupt and characteristic—"De l'Infanterie! Où voulez-vous que j'en prenne? Voulez-vous que j'en fasse!" ("Infantry! Whence am I to take them? Do you expect me to make them!") Words of terrible import at this period. They are the gauge of the alarm inspired by the Prussians, the measure of the losses inflicted on the French. The whole of Reille's corps had been drawn into the fight about Hougoumont. Of D'Erlon's corps, terribly mauled in its first encounter with the Allies, Durutte was wholly occupied with Prince Bernhard and Best; Marcognet could do nothing but skirmish in the valley; Quiot and Donzelot, alone, could supply infantry for onsets upon the centre. From La Haye Sainte they ascended the creste on both sides of the road, threw forward their clouds of skirmishers, and maintained a sharp and close fire upon the allied infantry. Ney sustained those on the west of La Hay Sainte with cavalry, and thus the British columns were exposed to a telling fire, which they could only answer with bullets, when they desired nothing better than a bayonet charge; but the latter they dared not attempt, because the horse were lying in wait behind the foot. The brunt of the infantry attack fell upon the left of Alten and the brigade of Lambert, and the right of Kempt. As the British were behind the ridge, the French were able to line the steep sides of the chaussée, and thus fire right and left on a level with the ground into

the very heart of the position, cruelly cutting up the allied infantry. Two guns were brought up to the crest, but they had not fired a second round ere the rifles of the 95th, from the hedges of the Wavre road, had destroyed the gunners. Vainly Donzelot and Quiot sought to press over the Wavre road. Their opponents, shattered where they stood, irritated, eager to charge, yet held in by the bonds of discipline, closed up over the dead and wounded, and would not give way. Alten's men, indeed, were sorely tried. So rapid, so heavy, was the incessant fire of the tirailleurs, that Alten requested Ompteda to deploy, and, "if practicable," drive them away. Ompteda, a good soldier, saw that it was not practicable, for he knew that a body of horse supported the daring French foot. Here again, as at Quatre Bras, the Prince of Orange was the unwitting destroyer of gallant men. Regardless of the arguments of the practised soldier, the Prince ordered Ompteda to deploy the 5th battalion of the Legïon. The brave German obeyed, and charged. The French receded, then suddenly ran in, and at the same moment a regiment of cuirassiers dashed into the flank of the Germans, rolled them up and killed their commander, who thus fell a sacrifice, with many brave men, to the rashness of his superior officer. The fire of the 95th, and the charge of the 3rd German Hussars, rescued the wreck of the German foot, and drove off the French cavalry. The 1st Foot Guards were more fortunate. Assailed by a body of skirmishers, who dealt out their fire upon the left squares of Adam's brigade also, and caused great havoc in the ranks, the Guards, by the order of the Duke, deployed, and, charging, drove off the enemy. Threatened by cavalry like the Germans, the Guards wheeled back into square, repulsed the horse; and, while the latter, swerving to their left, fell under the fire of the 52nd and 95th,

the Guards moved in security back into their former position.

The Guards, Legionaries, and Nassauers had, during this period, received and, with varying fortune, ultimately repelled, the assaults upon Hougoumont. But the Duke, thinking that Adam's brigade was too much exposed, although Sir John Colborne was willing to remain, ordered the brigade to retire to the crest of the position. The troops fell back accordingly in perfect order, and when halted, occupied a front which formed an obtuse angle with the front of Maitland's brigade. But Du Plat remained in the valley, and Halkett's Hanoverians kept their position in support.

It is now time to show what had not only kept Napoleon's reserve of infantry immovable near La Belle Alliance, but had diminished its numbers. It is time to recount

§ 7. *The Operations of Bulow.*

It will be remembered that Bulow's corps had been moving through the heavy crops and muddy roads since break of day. Delayed by the fire in Wavre, delayed by the obstacles to the passage of artillery presented at every turn of the wheel by those horrible cross-roads, it was noon before the advanced division reached Chapelle St. Lambert. While waiting the arrival of the other divisions, Bulow sent strong patrols across the Lasne, and finding the wood of Paris unoccupied by the French, he at once, with two battalions of infantry and four squadrons of cavalry, secured this important point. It was a critical moment. The defile of the Lasne which lay beneath him was deep, narrow, and swampy; if he had been opposed, he would have found it difficult to pass; but now the quickness of

his light troops, and the seeming remissness of Napoleon, had rendered the task comparatively easy; for only the obstacles nature had interposed were to be surmounted. Blucher had overtaken his foremost troops, and had stimulated the courage and perseverance of his "children," as he rode along. When he reached St. Lambert, Ney had just launched his first squadrons of horse into the allied line, and Blucher, always hungry for battle, hurried Bulow's troops across the ravine, although only two divisions had come up—those of Hiller and Losthin, with part of Prince William of Prussia's cavalry. Issuing from the wood into the open and hilly country between Frischermont and the Lasne, he formed his line of attack in rear of, and overlooking, the French main line, and perpendicularly to their front, and at once fell on. It was about half-past four. His opponent, Lobau, mustered some 10,000 men, of whom 2,000 were horse, and he had a score of guns. Opening fire and pressing on, Bulow extended his left nearly as far as the Lasne, and continually gained ground on that side. In an hour his two remaining divisions, those of Hacke and Ryssel, with the rest of the guns and cavalry, came into line. He now disposed of 29,000 men and 86 guns. Before this force Lobau at length receded until he arrived on a line with Planchenoit. Napoleon had no need of aides-de-camp to assure him of the peril; for the cannon-shot of the Prussians now rolled over the Charleroi road, the line of operation, and the line of retreat of the French army. Moreover, as his battalions came up, Bulow still extended his left, threatening the right of Lobau. Napoleon, to meet the movement of his new foes, sent Duhesme with the Young Guard and twenty-four guns to occupy and defend Planchenoit. At the same time the cavalry of Durutte had been compelled to front to its right, and the French line of battle on this side now stretched across the

broken country between Papelotte and Planchenoit to the banks of the Lasne. For a time the Young Guard sufficed to stop the progress of the Prussians, but these, renewing their onsets again and again, drove the French out of the village. This misfortune caused Napoleon to reinforce the right, and three battalions of the Imperial Guard, under Morand, with sixteen guns, were ordered to retake Planchenoit, while a regiment of grenadiers, and eight guns, occupied the pathway leading from Maison du Roi to Planchenoit, and a battalion of Chasseurs advanced almost as far as Chantelet. Morand charged into the village, his veteran soldiers quickly obtained the mastery, and the Prussians were driven once more up the heights on the eastward. This powerful attack seemed to restore the fortunes of the French on that side, and raised the hopes of Napoleon.

Blucher was not shaken by his reverses. The corps of Pirch I. was now visible near the wood of Paris, and he prepared to renew the combat, to fight his way into the rear of the French. Napoleon, seeing the Prussians recoil before the onset of the Old Guard, thought that Bulow had exhausted his strength, and that he still had the time and the means at his disposal wherewith to crush Wellington. Napoleon relied on his last reserve, 5,000 men of the Imperial Guard; Blucher relied more surely upon the corps of Pirch and the corps of Ziethen—the latter now near Ohain. Wellington relied upon the promise of Blucher; but more, upon the remains of the undaunted British and German infantry and horse, which had resisted so many charges, which had borne without flinching so murderous a fire. His lines had become thin, his front of battle contracted; the dead and dying were lying in horrid groups among the crops, matted with the blood of so many gallant men. His regiments of horse had been reduced to squadrons; some

of his battalions of foot to companies; of his artillery, so devoted and so effective, many guns had been disabled; hundreds of gunners and famous captains of batteries, like the noble Ramsay, had been killed or severely wounded at the post of duty and honour. Thousands had gone to the rear with the wounded. One regiment of horse, the Cumberland Hussars, for ever infamous, had fled to Brussels. The road through the forest, beyond Waterloo village, was a scene of chaotic confusion, which even the company of gallant sappers there could not withstand. Nevertheless, there were enough men on the field who rivalled their leader in endurance, and who were prepared to die where they stood rather than retire. The soldiers in the ranks, torn by shot and shell, closed up over their fallen comrades without hesitation. The young officers "ran as if they were at cricket" into the midst of the fire. The artillery gathered another branch from the tree of honour. Yet how many noble soldiers had fallen—Alten, Barnes, Delancey, Ompteda, Ramsay, Van Merle, Du Plat, the Ponsonbys, Picton, and many more whose names are writ upon the white marble slabs on the walls of the church of Waterloo; those simple rolls of honour which have drawn generous tears from so many eyes, and awakened deep emotions in so many hearts!

The critical moment of the day—the moment of defeat or victory—was fast approaching. Napoleon, believing that Bulow's attack was fairly counterchecked, determined to assail the British right with the Guard, and to support the onset with every available bayonet and sabre from the ravines of Papelotte to the Nivelles road. Durutte was to to keep in play Prince Bernhard and three Prussian battalions which had joined him, and also Best, on the high ground above Papelotte; Marcognet was to reinforce his front and press the skirmishers of Kempt; Quiot was

directed to impart renewed vigour to the contest which he maintained with Lambert; Donzelot was to extend to his left and fall upon the brigades of Ompteda, Kielmansegge, and Halkett; the Imperial Guard were to charge home upon Maitland; and Bachelu, Foy, and Guilleminot were to harass Hougoumont on all sides. The remains of the splendid cavalry of France and some horse artillery were to support the movement between La Haye Sainte and Hougoumont. Napoleon superintended the formation of the Guard, and Ney was ordered to lead it in person.

Wellington had foreseen the formidable attack which his adversary was preparing. The brigades of Chassé's division were advanced and posted well in rear of the British Guards, D'Aubremé on the right, and Ditmer on the left. The Brunswick battalions, which had stood on the right of Maitland, were moved to their left, and thrust in between Halkett and Kielmansegge. Kruse's Nassauers were formed in rear of the Brunswickers, and Vivian, at this opportune moment, rode up from the left, and brought his whole brigade into the line of fire close behind the Nassauers. In his right rear Vandeleur's brigade was posted; on his left were the remains of the Household Brigade and Ponsonby's dragoons. The Dutch-Belgian and Brunswick cavalry were in third line on the right and left. Du Plat's Germans and Hugh Halkett's Hanoverians were still in their old position behind Hougoumont; the defenders of which, Guards, Brunswickers, and Nassauers, were now as far advanced as the southern hedge of the orchard. On the extreme right, the hedges and brushwood on the slope were held by detachments of the Guards, the 51st and 14th Regiments of Mitchell's brigade, while the 23rd Regiment of that brigade stood above Du Plat, in rear of Adam's light brigade. Maitland's Guards were on the interior slope, sheltered from the fire of the French

guns, and like the light infantry brigade, which then prolonged the line on their right, were wholly unseen. On the right flank of Adam stood a battery of guns, and another battery between Adam and the Guards. Between the Guards and La Haye Sainte the batteries, in consequence of immense losses, and the incessant fire of the French skirmishers, were in great part disabled, and could be but feebly served.

It will be seen that the strength of the army at this moment was massed in a narrow space between the Charleroi and Nivelles roads. Wellington had now nothing to fear for his extreme left. Some squadrons of Ziethen's cavalry had already shown themselves above Papelotte, and his advanced infantry were moving down upon Smohain. Their approach gave rise to the delusive report, eagerly spread through the French army by the order of Napoleon, that "Grouchy had arrived," and the delusion was for a moment confirmed by the fire which the Prussians, deceived by the Nassau uniforms, opened upon the defenders of Smohain and La Haye.

§ 8. *Defeat of the Imperial Guard.*

The last French battery, hitherto held in reserve, had entered into line, and the fire of every gun not disabled was quickened. Napoleon, now alive to the peril which beset him, displayed something of his old energy. He directed the attack which it was Ney's business to see executed; he exhorted alike officers and soldiers; he urged them forward, he accompanied them on their way; he pointed out their enemies with a commanding gesture; he told his children that he desired to sup at Brussels, and they knew they expected them to hew out a path for him.

There were only ten battalions of the Imperial Guard which he could use. Twelve battalions were forming a living rampart against the Prussians in and in rear of Planchenoit. Each commanded by a general, proud of themselves, their victories, and their chief, these ten battalions were moved from the chaussée by their left into the hollow on the east of La Belle Alliance, and formed in echelon of columns of battalions. The first or right column of attack consisted of four battalions; the second, or left column, of six battalions; while two brought up from Maison du Roi were formed in reserve midway between La Belle Alliance and the southern end of the wood of Hougoumont.[1] The right was to move by the slightly elevated ridge, which, depressed in the middle, passes diagonally from La Belle Alliance towards the centre of the allied position. The left column, formed nearer to the enclosures of Hougoumont, was connected with Bachelu's troops by cavalry and skirmishers. Excited by Napoleon, who marched with them a short distance towards the front, and led by Ney on horseback, these veterans started forward, the right some minutes in advance of the left.

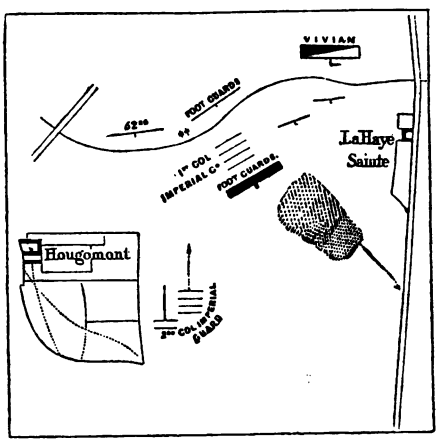
While these preparations were in progress, the whole French line advanced; and when the Guard began to climb the ascent, Guilleminot, Foy, Bachelu, Donzelot, Quiot, and Marcognet were deeply engaged. The Allies in Hougoumont held their ground, though assailed fiercely; and Marcognet and Durutte could do nothing but skirmish in the valley and on the slope. But Donzelot, extending his attack to the left of La Haye Sainte and immediately above it, and Quiot bursting out on the

[1] Much confusion exists in the accounts of these columns of attack, their number and formation. The conclusions in the text are derived from a study of the best accounts on both sides.

other side of the road, forced their troops forward with a fury that seemed irresistible. Cannon, planted in the intervals of the supporting columns, tore through the allied squares, and audacious skirmishers went, step by step, almost up to the very muzzles of the muskets of their opponents. Swarms of active troops lined the steep banks of the road, and even crowned the ridge. At one moment the Brunswickers, the Nassauers, the Hanoverians receded from the front. Some of them fell back to the very heads of Vivian's leading squadrons. But Vivian, and the Duke himself, once more roused their spirits by homely words, and Kielmansegge and the Prince of Orange led them back into the fight, and pushed the French from their forward position. The smoke hung in clouds, darkening the light of the declining sun. The rattle of musketry, the booming of guns, were incessant. At no period of the day had these troops been exposed to so vehement an attack. The British regiments held their ground amidst the murky tempest with a cool hardihood which has won praises from their foes. The 27th Regiment, in particular, more than decimated by the crashing fire of the French, stood obstinately where it had been posted, and left there a heap of dead which the next day drew tears from many a strong-hearted veteran, proud of the indomitable endurance of his race.

Behind the screen of smoke and fire came the deep but narrow masses of the Imperial Guard. When the combat above La Haye Sainte was at its height, the first column, preceded by tirailleurs, was half way up the slope. They bore directly on that point of the ridge behind which lay the British Guards. The allied artillery, ceasing to fight the French batteries, concentrated their fire on the more dangerous foe. Ney's horse was shot, and this gallant soldier, whom no peril could deter, led the column on foot

sword in hand. Friant, and Michel, and many officers fell, but the column, without losing its formation, went on, and the cries from its ranks, rising above the din of battle, scared some of the Dutch-Belgian columns, who were far out of immediate danger. Once the leading battalion halted, but at the voice of General Poret de Morvan it cheered and sprang forward. Wellington, who had returned from the centre, directed the commander of the



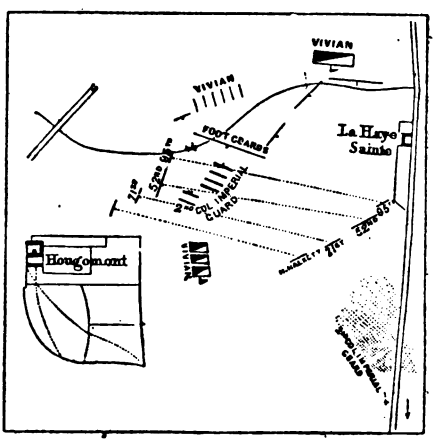
CHARGE OF THE FOOT GUARDS.

battery on Maitland's right to keep a look-out on his left, and stationed himself in the angle formed by the battery and the Guards. The guns, the Duke, and his slender staff were alone visible. When the Imperialists appeared above the level of the ridge, and upon it, the guns opened a terrific and rapid fire; and then the Duke gave the famous order, "Up Guards, and make ready!" Maitland's men, four deep, sprang to their feet within fifty

yards of the astonished French, and poured in a volley which struck the column like a bolt of iron. Vain was every attempt to deploy this heavy mass; the file-firing of the Guards and the shot of Napier's guns continued to crush it into a shapeless and confused heap, and when the Duke cried "Charge!" and the British Guards dashed forward with a cheer, Ney's veterans broke and fled. The British pursued for some distance, but an alarm of cavalry was raised, and they retired speedily, and resumed their position on the ridge, with the left now somewhat thrown forward.

During this brilliant combat, the second or left column had pursued its way across the field. Covered by skirmishers and supported by a body of cavalry, it presented an undaunted front, and inspired the French troops in the wood of Hougoumont with new courage. The defeat of the right columns did not arrest its movement, and once more the fortunes of the day seemed to hang upon a single thread. The skirmishers and horsemen drove in the skirmishers and gunners of the Allies, but failed to shake the infantry of Adam's brigade still concealed behind the ridge; and the cuirassiers who attempted to do so were charged by the 23rd Light Dragoons and 1st Germans, and driven far into the rear of the Imperial column. This force, now the sole hope of Napoleon, partly to avoid the artillery fire, but mainly to bring its front parallel to that of Maitland's brigade, now visible in line upon the ridge, diverged into a hollow on its right, and rapidly ascended the slope. The guns again opened fire, the British Guards renewed their destructive volleys, yet the daring Frenchmen, closing over their stricken comrades, kept on their way. At this moment Sir John Colborne, who had steadily observed their progress, wheeled the 52nd upon its left company, and brought it nearly parallel to the left flank

of the attacking column. What was he going to do? was the inquiry of his superior officer. "To make that column feel our fire," was the prompt answer. The Duke and Lord Hill had seen and approved of the movement, and the next moment the 52nd was over the brow, and "its whole fire, full and close, was brought to bear upon the heavy masses before it." The Imperial Guardsmen faced this new and terrible foe, and began to fire from the flank.



CHARGE OF THE 52ND.

For a brief space the combat was one of musketry. "A thick white smoke enveloped the contending parties." Napier's guns, double-shotted, the muskets of the British Guards, the rifles of the 95th, and the rapid fire of the 52nd, shook the column from front to rear. Reduced to an unsteady crowd, it yielded and fled, when, at Colborne's command, the 52nd brought down their bayonets to the charge, cheered, and dashed on. This splendid regiment,

supported on the right by the 71st, and on the left by the 95th, did not halt in its career in the track of the fugitives until it had swept, from right to left, along the front of the British centre. When the regiment halted, its left flank was in the hollow on the chaussée to Genappe, in advance of the orchard of La Haye Sainte, eight hundred yards from the ground at which the charge commenced. Colborne had led it on from the little hollow above the north-east angle of Hougoumont, working through the furrowed and muddy ground, trampling amidst the dead and the wounded, a bright beam of red light streaking the sombre and misty field, until the left flank of the brigade nearly touched the edge of the Charleroi road. Before its steady march the broken Imperialists withdrew without a halt; but not without looking back fiercely and grimly upon their pursuers, whose bayonets glinted in the yellow glare of the setting sun.

§ 9. *The Battle Won.*

The battle was won; it was now the time to reap in ample measure the fruits of victory.

The British leader, watchful of the course of the fight, had been patient and persevering for nine hours. It was now his turn to attack. He had been stricken long. It was now for him to break out from his fastness and strike. The charge of the 52nd, so magical and so decisive, began at the right moment, and carried forward with the right kind of daring, was speedily sustained. At the order of the Duke, Vivian's untouched light horsemen broke from the cloud of thick smoke which hung over the ridge, and wheeling round the right flank of the British Guards poured down the slope, through the space left vacant by the light infantry brigade, and ably led by its consummate chief,

swept onward over the field. Reille's Frenchmen still fought in the wood of Hougoumont; but above La Haye Sainte the fire of Donzelot's and of Quiot's men slackened when they saw the rout of the Imperial Guard, and they also turned. Marcognet and Durutte were rapidly yielding before the pressure of the leading columns of Ziethen's Prussians pouring out of Smohain; and only Pelet and Duhesme maintained an obstinate fight, as they resolutely clung to Planchenoit. But not for long. For on the ridge near the Guards, his figure standing out amidst the smoke against the bright north-western sky, Wellington was seen to raise his hat with a noble gesture, the signal for the wasted line of heroes to sweep like a dark wave from their coveted position, and roll out their lines and columns over the plain. With a pealing cheer, the whole line advanced just as the sun was sinking, and the Duke, sternly glad, but self-possessed, rode off into the thick of the fight, attended by only two officers, almost the last of the splendid squadron which carreered around him in the morning.

Napoleon had rallied the fugitives of the two attacking columns in front and on the west of La Belle Alliance, and had formed them into three squares, supported by cavalry. Farther to their left rear, on the rising ground between La Belle Alliance and Hougoumont, stood the two reserve battalions of the Old Guard, also in square, and flanked by cavalry and artillery. Adam's brigade having Halkett's Osnabruck regiment on its right, halted a short time to bring the men into closer array. Once more in order, the brigade went at the rallied squares of the Guard, which did not stay to fight, but faced about and retired. "Go on, Colborne," said the Duke, knowing well that the French, when set in motion, if pursued, do not readily rally. As one of the squares crossed the road the 52nd and 95th

followed, driving it before them. The 71st and the Hanoverians marched on the west side of the road in the rear of the two other squares.

In the meantime, Vivian's column, having passed by the rear of Adam and Halkett, had, with its left shoulders rather forward, arrived midway between the two positions. Vivian ordered the 10th and 18th to form line on the leading squadron of each regiment, while the 1st Germans remained in support. As the squadrons of the 10th were forming, a body of cuirassiers assailed the right squadron; that squadron met the charge, and the remainder began galloping into line, but not having time to complete the movement, the whole, in echelon, charged the French cavalry covering the left of the reserve squares of the Guard. Thus, with an inclination to the right, they came in succession of squadrons upon the French horse, and overthrew them. Vivian, satisfied with this success, rode back to bring up the 18th, and led them in a charge upon the French cavalry and artillery on the French right of the squares; and the 18th completely routed their foes. Returning to bring up the Germans, Vivian found that the right square of the Guard had moved off, and that Major Howard, with a squadron of the 10th, was close upon the remaining square, and losing men from its fire. Seeing Halkett's regiment on the left, and counting on its active support, Vivian did not hesitate to charge the square with Howard's hussars. But the Hanoverians fired instead of charging; the cavalry were too weak to penetrate the hedge of bayonets; and, as neither the horsemen nor the infantry would give way, a desperate combat followed, in which Howard was killed, and the 10th lost many men. But the square at length fell slowly back, and reaching a hollow way leading to the Charleroi road, scrambled into it, and joined the main stream of the fugitive army.

The skilful and vigorous attacks made by Vivian with the hussar brigade; the advance of Vandeleur along the eastern enclosure of Hougoumont, and his charges upon Reille's corps; the unfaltering march of the light infantry brigade, and especially of the 52nd Regiment; the rapid progress of the Prussians in front of Papelotte; and the advance of the whole allied line from the ridge, completed the work which the 52nd had so happily begun. The firmness of Lobau, Pelet and Duhesme in Planchenoit alone saved Napoleon from being made prisoner. The Old Guard held that strong village with a valour and tenacity beyond praise. The Prussians, unable to force them out of the churchyard by a front attack, were compelled to turn the village on both flanks, and the delay caused by this operation enabled thousands of D'Erlon's men, pressed by Ziethen's conquering advance, to escape through the gap between Planchenoit and Rossomme. Nevertheless many were cut off. When the remnant of the Old Guard gave way and Bulow's Prussians marched up from the valley to the chaussée, they found the main body of the French flying in utter disorder along the road and across the fields. The great high road was choked up by the fugitives; the very efforts of the pursuers were obstructed by the chaos into which they plunged. Arms were thrown down, packs cast off, guns abandoned. The British and the Prussians, converging upon the Charleroi road between La Belle Alliance and Rossomme, forced all they did not take or slay into the fields or the main road. The cannonade had ceased, the last gun fired being a French cannon turned upon the routed enemy. Darkness had settled over the field; the masses, moving through the obscurity, hurtled against each other, and more than once friends were mistaken for foes. But in the gloom of that summer evening, lighted only by a rising moon, there was

such exultation as men can feel only when, by fortitude and skill, they have snatched a brilliant victory from the very jaws of destruction. As the Prussians came up from the blood-stained village of Planchenoit, their bands played "God save the King," and the heroic British infantry in the van answered with true British cheers.

Wellington, leaving the ridge, had followed Colborne until he saw the light infantry brigade once more on the heels of the foe, and then he had passed to the right towards the scene of Vivian's triumphs. Almost alone, he was still the same, cool, watchful, and unmoved. He made his way back to the high road, and somewhere between La Maison du Roi and Rossomme, and not at La Belle Alliance, Blucher came up with him, and the two marshals whose heads had planned the manœuvres which led to this decisive stroke, saluted each other by the light of the dim moon, the Prussian, after the continental fashion, kissing his friend on both cheeks.

Napoleon had taken part in the last encounters. During the attack of the Imperial Guard he had ridden as far as the orchard of La Haye Sainte; when the Guard recoiled he had rallied them; when the 52nd and the other regiments of the brigade pursued so promptly, he had gradually fallen back with the steadier masses of the fugitives, surrounded by the truly *devoués* of those days, the veterans of the Guard. When Vivian and Vandeleur had tried to cut in upon his line of retreat, a majestic body of horse grenadiers, resolute and compact, barred the way, and walked superbly from the field in unassailable order. Lobau had been captured. Cambronne, who did not utter the words which so well express the sentiments of the Old Guard—"La Garde meurt et ne se rend pas"—shared the same fate. Ney who, throughout the battle, had dared,

positively sought, death in the very press of the retreat, on horseback, with bare head and garments torn with shot and stained with mud, fierce with excitement, and waving a broken sword, strove to rally the flyers by exclaiming, "Come with me, and I will show you how a Marshal of France can die upon the field of battle!" "You and I," he had said to D'Erlon, "if we are spared by British grape shot, we are sure of our lot, we shall be hanged!" How nearly the bravest of the brave foresaw his fate.

Wellington halted his troops when the forward regiments had reached Rossomme; and Blucher undertook to pursue relentlessly the routed army. This task fell to the lot of Gneisenau. In his hands the pursuit was not likely to be slack, nor did it prove so. Through the night, sometimes with horse and foot, sometimes with horse alone, always with drums and bugles, he kept close on the heels of the enemy, and the sound of the bugle and beat of the drum alone sufficed to drive the French from nine bivouacs, and to force them before nightfall over the Sambre. Napoleon had made no preparation for a retreat, although he had fought with only one road in his rear. This alone shows the infatuation of the man. Having diverged from the press, he made a detour on the western side of the road, and cut in upon it again at Genappe. Here he found the defile blocked up by the wreck of the baggage, and a struggling, terrified, shouting mob, the wreck of that splendid host he had marshalled so arrogantly in the morning. Forcing his way through the throng, "preceded and escorted by the tumult," he reached Quatre Bras. Here he halted, and sent to Grouchy news of the lost battle, but forgot to name the point upon which he should march. Then, mounting once more, he rode off into the moonlight, and silently, without halting, passed through Charleroi at dawn. Outside the town he obtained a

carriage, and unattended, except by Bertrand, drove to Philippeville.

The Prussian pursuit had been a wild rollicking chase. The mere blare of a trumpet, the mere rattle of a drum, had scared away the unhappy French. When his infantry were exhausted Gneisenau mounted the drummers, and with these and a few squadrons he went clattering along the pavé and drumming through the night. At dawn he halted: the French had disappeared.

They had fled through Marchienne and Charleroi. Napoleon made no effort to rally them. The pontoons, the spare artillery train, and the provision waggons were abandoned. The carts laden with bread, flour, wine and brandy, the military chest containing six millions, were overturned and pillaged by famished mobs of soldiers, and the crowd, ever increasing, fought with bayonet, sabre, and bullet, for food and gold. "C'etaient les horreurs de Vilna aux portes de la France!" is the exclamation of Charras, after describing these scenes.

§ 10. *Losses.*

It is not now, perhaps it never was, possible to ascertain exactly the losses of the Anglo-Allied and Prussian armies in the battle of Waterloo; but we believe 15,000 for the former and 7,000 for the latter is near the truth. Captain Siborne fixes Wellington's losses at 14,728, and Blucher's at 6,998.[1] Colonel Charras estimates the British loss at 15,094; but he has included in his estimate the losses of the Hanoverians at Quatre Bras. The same writer is of opinion that 6,998, the Prussian estimate of Blucher's loss,

[1] As a curious fact it may be stated that Siborne has added up incorrectly the items of a table of the Prussian losses, making the total 6,775 instead of 6,998; while the latter figure does not agree with the total in a table given in the Appendix—6,945.

is a maximum. The "missing," amounting to more than 4,000 men in both armies, includes many men who went to the rear with the wounded, and who subsequently rejoined their regiments, and many also who were killed.[1] What the losses of the French were is mere matter of estimate, but the total in killed, wounded, and prisoners cannot have been less than 30,000. They also lost the whole of their artillery, ammunition, waggons, baggage, and train. The Anglo-allied army captured 122 guns, 267 ammunition waggons, and twenty spare carriages, two eagles, and 5,000 prisoners.

The actual number of British troops engaged at Waterloo was 23,991—the loss 6,936, of whom more than 1,419 were killed. The British troops thus constituted a little more than one-third of the Anglo-Allied army, and their loss was a little under one-third of their strength. There were 85 officers killed and 365 wounded. Ten are returned as "missing," and these the Duke says must be "supposed killed." The troops of the German Legion, of value equal to our own troops, were 5,824 strong: they lost nearly one-third—1,584 of all ranks. The Dutch-Belgian loss is an estimate, no exact returns existing; putting it at 4,000, that number is a little less than one-fourth of their strength —17,784. The Nassauers lost one-fifth, the Hanoverians about one-seventh of the force engaged, respectively; and the Brunswickers one-ninth. Thus more than one-half of the total loss fell upon the British and the German Legionaries. The Prussians lost about one-seventh of the force actually engaged, under 7,000 out of 51,000. These figures would show, if the narrative of the battle did not, by whom the brunt of the action was borne.

[1] For instance: the "missing," in a regiment of 210 swords in the field, as set down in the general return, is 97, yet 70 of these were lying stiff and stark on the field that night—dead. The return states the

§ 11. *Reflections on Waterloo.*

The plan and conduct of the battle of Waterloo may well be regarded as an exhausted subject of criticism, and the reader may be inclined to pass over what is here said thereon; yet, so great has been the influence of the writings of Napoleon, and of those who have drawn their inspiration from the poisoned fountains of St. Helena, that no one, pretending to narrate the campaign of 1815, can, with propriety, neglect that subject. There are some facts which need to be stated succinctly, so that they may remain fixed in the reader's mind. This it is proposed to do here.

It has been seen that Napoleon formed an exaggerated estimate of the injury he had inflicted on the Prussians at the battle of Ligny, and a totally erroneous conjecture respecting their line of retreat; that he detached upwards of 30,000 men to the right under Grouchy, but did not give that general sufficiently precise instructions, and that both Grouchy and himself neglected to keep up a constant and unintermitting watch from their inner flanks. Hence, in consequence of the lax watch maintained on the night and morning of the 16-17th, the Prussians were able to get away unperceived; and in consequence of the omission on the part of both to patrol the country between the two divergent lines of operation which they respectively adopted, Wellington and Blucher, who did not neglect this essential precaution, were able, not only to follow the movements of the French armies, but to concert a plan for the destruction of Napoleon. It cannot be too often repeated, since such erroneous ideas still prevail on this head, that the battle of Waterloo was the result of a plan of combined operations, arranged by the English and Prussian marshals on the

number of "killed" in this regiment to be *seventeen*. The regiment referred to is the 2nd Life Guards.

morning of the 17th. Wellington's "temerity," therefore, turns out to have been not temerity, but wise daring based upon actual knowledge, and abounding confidence in Prince Blucher. That the English leader, with his unequal army, risked defeat in planting himself across the path of Napoleon, at the head of the choicest army he ever commanded, is certain; but risk is nothing new in warfare, which consists in knowing when to incur and when to avoid a peril like that which Wellington faced with so much equanimity and resolution on the 18th of June. His justification for incurring the peril was his belief in the pledged word of the Prussian marshal, and the marshal's justification for committing three-fourths of his army to a hazardous flank march across a broken and rain-saturated country, was his belief that Wellington would redeem his pledged word and stand the shock of the French legions until the Prussians developed a superior force upon their right flank and in their rear. The plan, therefore, was this simple one: Wellington was to fight a battle, *coûte que coûte;* the Prussians were to come up and turn the French army. To execute this well-defined purpose Wellington halted and fronted at Waterloo. This is the cardinal fact which should be ever present to the mind of the reader.

It will be seen that the issue depended upon the answers to two questions—Could the Anglo-Allied army stand long enough against the veterans of France? Would the Prussians arrive in time? We have shown that the Prussians might have arrived earlier in the field had Bulow crossed the Dyle on the evening of the 17th, or had he on the morning of the 18th passed that river above the town. The delay caused by the fire in Wavre augmented the chances against Wellington. But on the other hand the balance was restored by delay on the other side—the postponement of the action until nearly noon. Again, the in-

equality of the Anglo-Allied army was more than counterbalanced by the strength of the position it defended, and still more by the admirable skill which Wellington showed in the disposition of his troops. His battle array is a masterpiece. Not only were his reserves completely sheltered, but in the main they were completely hidden from the enemy. By keeping powerful masses on his right, Wellington not only prevented effectually any attempt to turn him on that side, but he was enabled to economize his means of resistance and reinforce the weakened points of his front line in perfect security. Cool and clear-sighted, he ordered up his troops in exact proportion to the requirements of the moment, and thus towards the end of the day he had in hand reserves, both of infantry and cavalry, stronger than those of Napoleon. Hence, the delay of the Prussians, so trying to the Anglo-Allied army, was rendered less baneful than it might have been. It was by perseverance,[1] and the skilful apportionment of means to ends, that Wellington not only resisted and repelled, but wrested victory from the French troops opposed to him. His resolution in fighting, his constancy in maintaining the combat, are enhanced by the fact that he believed Napoleon disposed of *four* corps d'armée, whereas he only had, beside the mass of the Imperial Guard, the 1st and 2nd and the larger portion of

[1] Sir James Shaw Kennedy, whom we have frequently quoted, has a striking passage on this subject. "Upon the whole," he says, "there seems fair reason to infer, that, like Cæsar, Wellington was ready, at all periods of his career, to throw for victory, at all hazards, with a coolness and self-possession that nothing could shake; while Napoleon, in his later campaigns, fell more into the habit of trusting to his general directions; hence the general inference is probably not far from being correct, that, while Napoleon, perhaps, exceeded all men in general views in war, he did not display on all occasions the imperturbable moral firmness, combined with the utmost personal energy, that seem never for a moment to have been wanting in Cæsar and Wellington."

the 6th corps. The 3rd and 4th and the remainder of the 6th were with Grouchy on the Dyle.

Colonel Charras reproaches Wellington with only one fault in the conduct of the battle—that of leaving 17,000 men at Hal, under the impression that he might be turned by the Hal road. Up to a late period of his life, perhaps to the end of it, Wellington remained firmly convinced that "Napoleon ought to have attacked by other lines rather than by the valley of the Sambre and of the Meuse;" and he has further recorded the opinion that, "even up to the last moment, previous to the attack upon his position at Waterloo, he conceived that they [the enemy] would endeavour to turn it by a march upon Hal." He has given no reasons for this opinion, but it is surely sufficient that he believed in the existence of danger on that side, and no one can say he did not take effectual measures at least to minimise its possible consequences. "It might be a nice question for military discussion," is the concluding remark of the Duke's commentary on the narrative of General Clausewitz, "whether Bonaparte was right in endeavouring to force the position of Waterloo, or the Duke right in thinking that from the evening of the 16th he would have taken a wiser course if he had moved to his left, reached the high road leading from Mons to Brussels, and turned the right of the position of the Allies by Hal. It is obvious that the Duke was prepared for such a movement." The answer of the French historian, Charras, is, that on the morning of the 18th Wellington knew that Napoleon had not moved on to the road from Mons to Brussels, and that, therefore, he ought to have called up at once the division at Hal; and the majority of English military commentators agree with Charras.

The English general has been censured for fighting a battle with a defile in his rear. This is one of the many

accusations made by the memoir-writers of St. Helena. We have shown that it was Napoleon who really fought a battle with a defile in his rear—the very narrow defile of Genappe. The great road through the forest of Soignies, was a defile only in a limited sense, for the forest, on either side, furnished cover out of which English infantry certainly could not have been forced. Two paved roads, available for guns, and three cross roads, ran through the forest, which itself, being free from brushwood, could be traversed even by horsemen. Whereas Napoleon had behind him only one road, and not one position between Waterloo and the French frontier suitable for the rallying of a defeated army. Whatever may have been the faults of Wellington as a soldier, the choice of bad positions was not one; and only a critic who referred all his own victories to his own genius, and his defeats to "fate," could have failed to recognize the position of Mont St. Jean as one of Wellington's most judicious selections.

All battles are not lost by the faults of those who suffer defeat. "Fortune" exercises a powerful influence in war. But it was not fortune who played Napoleon false at Waterloo. The secret is not far to seek. He allowed himself to be outgeneralled and outnumbered on a battle-field of his enemy's own choosing. It was not Ney, it was not Grouchy; it was skill in combination, promptness and vigilance in execution, on the part of Wellington and Blucher, which, humanly speaking, assured his destruction. On the night of the 16th the chance was in his favour; he lost it on the morning of the 17th, and never regained it for a moment. The proximate result was Waterloo; the final result for him was St. Helena.

Independently of the great faults committed by Napoleon—faults arising from a failing energy and an imperious habit of underrating his opponents—there were

many minor errors in the conduct of the battle itself. One whole corps was absorbed in fruitless onslaughts upon Hougoumont. In the first grand attack another whole corps lost a fifth of its infantry. This result has been justly ascribed partly to the formation of D'Erlon's columns, but mainly to the neglect of Ney or Napoleon to support the infantry with horsemen. Napoleon supposed, erroneously, his enemy's left to be weaker than it was in reality, and he may have deemed his huge columns and his big batteries sufficient alone to drive the Allies from the position. The error was speedily demonstrated, but the prompt demonstration cost him his infantry reserve. This led to another mistaken operation—the wasteful employment of the whole cavalry at his disposal in an attack upon the centre. Yet at the moment when Ney launched his magnificent horsemen over the ridge, Napoleon had no other force fit to continue the combat except the Imperial Guard. These errors, however, only served to counterbalance the enormous disparity between the quality of the two armies taken in bulk; for so superior, as a whole, was the French to the Anglo-Allied army, that it required all the fortitude and valour of Wellington's choicest soldiers to repel the fierce and repeated onsets of the gallant Frenchmen. No soldiers could have fought more bravely. Yet there was a man who, while these scenes were things of yesterday, declared in cold blood that Waterloo was lost "because no one did his duty." That man was Napoleon!

The share of the Prussians in the battle of Waterloo has been the theme of much controversy, where there should have been none. It has been alternately exaggerated into the sole cause of victory, and diminished into an incident of little importance. A common notion even now is, that the Prussians saved Wellington from some false position

into which, with rare improvidence, he had thrown himself. It has been seen how far from the truth are these vulgar errors. The share of the Prussians in the action is well defined. The battle was fought, we must repeat again, by common agreement; the Prussians arrived where they did in consequence of that agreement. The brunt of the strife fell upon Wellington's forces, because the junction of the two armies was hindered by serious and unlooked-for obstacles. When Bulow did arrive, his presence produced immediate effects. The mere apparition of his columns coming over the hills beyond the Lasne diverted 2,500 horsemen to that side. His presence in the wood of Paris obliged Napoleon to withhold Lobau from the attack on Wellington's left. Bulow's advance upon Planchenoit led to the detachment thither, in succession, of more than half the battalions of the Imperial Guard. The appearance of Prussian infantry about Frischermont and Smohain paralyzed the infantry of Durutte, and the cavalry of Jacquinot. When Pirch I. arrived, when the heads of Ziethen's columns showed on the road from Ohain, Napoleon had not a man or a gun to dispose of. In these facts we have the measure of the large share which the Prussians may fairly claim in the battle of Waterloo. They were the means of reducing the French force actually engaged with Wellington by some 15,000 men and upwards of forty guns. They filled the mind of Napoleon with disquiet, they exercised considerable influence over a part of his army. In short, the Prussians, when they did come into action—and Wellington heard nothing of them until six o'clock, although Bulow debouched from the wood of Paris between four and five—the Prussians performed, and performed well, the part they had undertaken to play. Their loss of 6,000 or 7,000 men in four hours proves their valour and activity. But it must not be forgotten, on the

other hand, that Wellington "found himself in a position," to use his own plain language, to make the attack which produced the final result; that, before Ziethen came into line, and before Bulow and Pirch I. could expel the battalions of the Guard from Planchenoit, Wellington had stricken down the battalions of the Guard opposed to him; and had launched Colborne and Vivian in an offensive movement. It was when Zeithen was bursting with such vigour into the field of battle, but before the French Guard were driven out of Planchenoit, that he led from the ridge the valiant remains of his whole line. There was enough glory gathered on that field to satisfy both nations, but surely the greater share should fall to those who, in every sense, bore the burden and heat of the day, and gave the *coup de grace*. Wellington struck the decisive stroke; Blucher, who so loyally redeemed the pledge which he had given to his comrade, changed a terrible defeat into an irrecoverable disaster.

§ 12. *After the Battle.*

The British army bivouacked on the battle-field which they had won from the French. A profound stillness, broken only by the cries of wounded men and horses, succeeded the stunning uproar of that tremendous conflict. The soldiers lighted fires, and some cooked their suppers in the cuirasses of their conquered foes. The plunderers and marauders were abroad, pillaging and outraging the wounded who lay beside, and often intertwined with the dead, sleeping upon the bed of honour. It was a terrible night. In strange contrast appeared the exultation of the living and the woes of the unsuccoured wounded. Yet was the joy of every man among the former tempered with sorrow, for each had lost a comrade—many, dear friends.

After his interview with Blucher, Wellington rode slowly back to his head-quarters at Waterloo, more grieved than exultant. He slept there that night, and the next day wrote his Waterloo despatch, and then rode to Brussels. In his letters from that place we again find expressions which show how keenly he felt for others. To the Duke of Beaufort he wrote—"The losses I have sustained have quite broken me down; and I have no feeling for the advantages we have acquired." "The glory resulting from such actions, so dearly bought, is no consolation to me," are his words to Lord Aberdeen. And when he visited Lady Mornington and her daughter at Brussels, the Duke burst into tears and exclaimed—"The next greatest misfortune to losing a battle is to gain such a victory as this." No doubt he thought at the moment of Gordon, Ponsonby, Picton, De Lancy, Fitzroy Somerset, friends as well as comrades, but the great mass of slaughter on that bloody day must have been also a moving cause of anguish in a mind like his. "I have never fought such a battle, nor won such a victory," he wrote to Dumouriez, and "I hope it is finished with Bonaparte." But to Lord Fitzroy Somerset he said, "I have never fought such a battle, and I trust I shall never fight such another." These words are the noblest comment on a battle in which the Soldier of Duty wrested victory from the Soldier of Ambition.

Prince Blucher, who directed two corps, those of Bulow and Ziethen, in pursuit of the French, had his head-quarters on the night of the 18th at Genappe. On the 19th Ziethen was at Charleroi and Blucher at Gosselies; and on the 20th the Prussians were over the frontier. Pirch I. had, on the 18th, been moved to the left by Aywiers, and this general was instructed to place himself across Grouchy's line of retreat from Wavre, and cut him

off. The Anglo-allied army did not move off until the 19th, taking the road to Nivelles, where the Duke of Wellington had his head-quarters until the 20th. On the 21st, the army having passed by Mons and Binche, entered France by Malplaquet. The campaign in Belgium finished with the rout of the French at Waterloo, save one portion of it, which may here fitly find a place.

§ 13. *The Combat of Wavre, and Retreat of Grouchy.*

On the morning of the 18th, Grouchy, as the reader will remember, had marched from Gembloux with uncertain steps and at a lingering pace. Vandamme's corps arriving at La Baraque about two, forced the Prussian rear-guard, then engaged in an artillery combat with Excelmans, to retire. The French moved on slowly, and the Prussians, in good order, and without hurry, crossed the Dyle. The two divisions of the corps of Pirch I., halted at Wavre up to this time, now started for St. Lambert. The progress of Grouchy was so slow that Borcke led off the bulk of his division towards Couture, on the Lasne, and Thielemann was preparing to follow in the same track, in accordance with the instructions of Blucher, when his movement was arrested by the appearance of the whole of Vandamme's corps opposite to Wavre.

The scene of this brilliant combat was a picturesque and wooded valley, through which ran the winding stream of the Dyle. The river is narrow, and not usually deep, but on the 18th the heavy rains had filled the ditches in the swampy meadows, and so swollen the waters of the river, that it was not fordable in any part. The stream was bordered with trees, more thickly on the left than on the right bank. Below Wavre stood the villages of Bierge, Limale, and Limalette, each having its bridge over the

river. The hills on the French side, higher than those on the Prussian, sloped down gradually to the banks of the stream. On both sides a narrow belt of meadow-land bordered the river, and from its inner margin on the left bank the hills rose abruptly, but to no great height. At Bierge a mill served as a defence to the bridge, and the heights above afforded a good position for artillery and reserves. Below Wavre stood Lower Wavre, having a wooden bridge. The Dyle runs through Wavre itself, but the greater part of the town is on the left or Prussian bank. Two stone bridges, a larger and a smaller one, crossed the stream, only one of which was hastily barricaded. Thielemann, to defend his position, occupied Wavre and the banks of the river with light troops, and posted Stülpnagel above Bierge, Kämpfen above Wavre, and Luck on the left of Kämpfen, across the road to Brussels. The suburb on the right bank was occupied by three battalions under Colonel Zepelin. The guns were placed in good positions on the heights. By the disposition of his reserves, the Prussian general was able to support readily any menaced point. Deprived of Borcke's division, either by his own order or a misunderstanding, he mustered only 15,200 men, against whom Grouchy brought 32,000 into the field, including 5,000 horsemen.

The action commenced with the fire of French batteries posted opposite Wavre and Bierge. The skirmishers descended rapidly into the valley, and the windings of the stream were soon marked out by the smoke of the foremost opponents on both sides. Vandamme, possessing himself of the suburb, simultaneously attacked the bridges of Wavre and the mill and bridge of Bierge. Stimulated by the sound of the cannonade at Waterloo, Grouchy urged on his troops, but in spite of their numerical superiority, they failed to make any impression on the Prussian

position. If they made a dash at the bridges of Wavre, they had no sooner crossed them than the reserves, issuing from the streets parallel to the river, met and forced them back again. If they assailed the mill of Bierge, the musketry and guns of the defenders smote them down before they could close with their enemy. Eleven times, says a French writer, Vandamme's columns were broken in their direct assaults upon Bierge and Wavre. Three hours had been spent in these fruitless efforts. As Vandamme made no progress, Grouchy sent the leading battalion of Hulot's division of Gérard's corps, now arriving on the field, against Bierge, and again the onset failed. The evening was wearing away. Becoming impatient, Grouchy dismounted, and, accompanied by Gérard, renewed the attack on Bierge. Gérard was severely wounded, and the battalion recoiled. It was about this time, between seven and eight, that Grouchy received the despatch written by Soult at one, directing him to approach the main army and crush Bulow *flagrante delicto*. "Crush Bulow!" exclaims Colonel Charras. "At the moment when these instructions arrived, Bulow had long been before Planchenoit, at the head of his corps d'armée, engaged with Lobau, Duhesme, Morand; and Grouchy was twelve miles from Planchenoit."

The despatch, however, produced one important result; Grouchy determined not to waste any more troops in attacks on the Prussian front, but to do what he ought to have done long before, to cross the Dyle at Limale or Limalette, and turn the right of Thielemann. This was the more practicable, since Colonel von Stengel, commanding at Limale, had neglected to destroy or barricade the bridge, although Pajol's cavalry were on the opposite bank. To execute his project, Grouchy, instructing Vandamme to sustain the fight in front, led Gérard's corps,

now on the field, against Limale. The operation occupied much time, but the troops, once drawn together, speedily carried the bridge, and Gérard's corps, together with the horse and foot of Pajol and Teste, who, it may be remembered, were, after Ligny, detached from Lobau's corps, rapidly crossed to the left bank of the river. Thielemann learned the result of this unlooked-for misfortune only when Stengel reported his defeat. The Prussian general speedily changed his front to the right, and endeavoured to force back the French; but the movement failed. Night fell, and the French were solidly established on the left bank from Limale towards Rixensart. The combat, however, continued until nearly midnight. It was a brilliant action, and the defence of Wavre and Bierge was especially creditable to the Prussians.

During the night, Thielemann's scouts returned with the cheering news that Napoleon had been defeated, but not with news of the utter rout of the main French army. He determined, therefore, to assail Grouchy at daybreak, fully expecting that the French marshal, informed of the reverse sustained by his master, would retreat. Continuing to hold Lower Wavre, Wavre, and the mill of Bierge, Thielemann, with the rest of his army, took up a new line, extending from Bierge to the wood of Rixensart, the infantry and artillery in front, the cavalry in support. Grouchy, ignorant of the fate of Napoleon, anxious and agitated because he had received no intelligence, yet buoyed up by the hope that Napoleon had been successful, determined not to retreat, but to fight; to drive back the Prussians, and then endeavour to join the Emperor, as he had been ordered to do. At midnight, therefore, he directed Vandamme to send every man he could spare across the Dyle, leaving on the right bank only a force sufficient to maintain a show of assaulting Wavre. He

called on Vandamme, in the name of France, to execute his orders immediately. The safety of the army depended upon him. At daybreak Thielemann advanced his infantry, and began the combat by a fire of artillery, thus anticipating Grouchy. But the French, superior in every arm, answered by a counter attack, falling simultaneously upon every part of the line, and developing considerable force upon the Prussian right. The result of four hours' fighting was that the Prussians were driven out of the wood of Rixensart, and Thielemann was compelled to throw back his right as far as the hamlet of Chambre. During this period, while Stengel had gone off to rejoin Ziethen, Borcke had approached the French left, but had permitted himself to be controlled by three regiments of horse, detached by Grouchy towards St. Lambert. When he had taken up his new position, Thielemann received positive news of the victory of the 18th, and of the flight of the French over the Sambre. The intelligence flew from lip to lip, and once more the Prussians assumed the offensive. Advancing with loud shouts and great spirit, they recovered the wood of Rixensart; but again numbers prevailed, and the wood was retaken. At the same time Teste carried the heights of Bierge, and the mill being abandoned, Vandamme instantly sent Berthezène's division across the bridge. Thus pressed on both flanks, Thielemann drew his light troops out of Wavre, and making good use of his guns and cavalry, fell back skillfully on the road to Louvain, halting and taking up a position at St. Achtenrode. He had lost 2,476 men in the two days' fighting.

The French pursued, but only as far as Les Bavettes. For, about eleven o'clock, an officer on a jaded horse rode up to Grouchy. He had been eleven hours traversing the thirty miles which separate Quatre Bras from Wavre. He

carried no despatches, he simply related that Napoleon, resting a moment at Quatre Bras in his flight from Waterloo, had directed him to find Grouchy, and tell him of the loss of the battle, and the complete destruction of the French army!

One can hardly imagine the effect of this succinct and terrible statement upon the French marshal, elated just then by his long-deferred and dearly bought victory. French writers tell us that tears started in his eyes, and that in his anguish he wept aloud. And well he might. For, in the hour of success, he saw himself deprived suddenly of its fruits, isolated in the midst of powerful foes, and without a single word of counsel, without any order from Napoleon, without any indication of the course he should adopt.

Face to face with danger, thrown entirely on his own resources, responsible, he alone, for the safety of nearly 30,000 men, Grouchy rapidly recovered self-possession, rejected the mad advice of Vandamme to march on Brussels, rose equal to the emergency, and determined at once to retreat through Namur upon Givet. A long road lay before him, beset with foes. At that very moment, although he knew it not, the corps of Pirch I., detached from La Belle Alliance on the 18th, was actually in its bivouac at Mellery, a short march from Gembloux. But, with misfortune, Grouchy recovered his faculties. He showed no hesitation now. Sending cavalry in feigned pursuit of Thielemann, he ordered Excelmans, with seven regiments of horse, to ride hard and seize Namur, a service which was performed well and speedily. Then, taking Gérard's corps, he moved himself towards Sombref. Vandamme marched off in the afternoon, and at nightfall his light cavalry followed in his track. At midnight, Vandamme was in Gembloux, Grouchy on the road from

Nivelles to Namur, near Sombref, and Excelmans in Namur. By a singular coincidence Thielemann at St. Achtenrode, and Pirch I. at Mellery, heard, about five in the morning of the 20th, that Grouchy was hastily retreating on Namur. Both moved forward in rapid pursuit. Thielemann caught a glimpse of the rear-guard of Vandamme at Rhisnes, but he did not overtake them until they had reached their supports a league from Namur. Pirch I., on learning the retreat of the French, sent a force under Colonel von Sohr to Gembloux, a wrong direction as it turned out, for, on arriving there, Von Sohr found Thielemann in full pursuit of Vandamme. He, therefore, determined to make for the high road, and cut off the fugitives if possible. But he was too late, for Grouchy's rear-guard, coming from Sombref, had reached Temploux before Von Sohr came up. Attacking this rear-guard at the moment when Thielemann assailed Vandamme, he forced it to give ground; but the French showed a bold front, and effected an orderly retreat into Namur. Here, while the main body of Grouchy's army filed up the left bank of the Meuse, Teste's division maintained the town with such skill, bravery, and obstinacy, that they were not forced to retire until nightfall. Teste took his measures so ably that he had time to file his men across the parapets of the bridge over the Sambre without disturbing the barricade; and when the Prussians reached the gate of Dinant they found their course arrested by heaps of blazing straw and pitch piled up in the road, and fired at the last moment. The assault upon Namur cost the Prussians 1,500 men in killed and wounded. At four on the morning of the 21st Teste entered Dinant. Grouchy's skilful retreat, and Teste's brave and equally skilful defence of Namur, without artillery, are among the brightest episodes of the Waterloo campaign. The negligence of Thiele-

mann, who did not watch Grouchy with sufficient vigilance, and the grosser negligence and timidity of Pirch I., who lingered at Mellery when he should have been at Sombref, present conspicuous instances of conduct to be avoided in war.

The campaign in Belgium was now completely terminated. Thenceforth the military operations of the Allies were to take place on the soil of France. Grouchy quitted Dinant, and arrived safely at Givet on the 21st, where he halted. At this time the head-quarters of Blucher were at Noyelle, and those of Wellington at Malplaquet.

BOOK II.

THE ALLIES IN FRANCE.

THE ALLIES IN FRANCE.

CHAPTER I.

RAPID FALL OF NAPOLEON.

§ 1. *The Invasion of France.*

THE victory of Waterloo, so complete and overwhelming, opened the road to Paris, and the flight of Napoleon was the signal for an invasion of France from the Alps to the Sambre. It is not a brilliant picture which we have now to paint. The element of heroism vanishes from the scene with the last files of the Imperial Guard, amid the carnage of Planchenoit and the tumultuous rush from La Belle Alliance. The retreat of Grouchy, it is true, is a gleam of light amidst the pervading gloom; but the retreat of Grouchy stands alone. As skilful and decided, when left to his own resources, as he had been timid and wavering, when under the influence of Napoleon, he had carried the bulk of his army from out the very midst of his foes; and four days after the battle of Waterloo he was marching through Rocroi, *en route* for Soissons. But at this moment Napoleon had abdicated, and ere the troops of Grouchy were behind the Aisne, Napoleon was a quasi prisoner at La Malmaison, the house of the deserted Josephine.

We left Napoleon driving from Marcinelle to Philippeville, and the fragments of the army under his command pillaging the baggage and stores in the streets of Charleroi, and hurrying over the bridge at Marchienne. The Emperor kept well in advance of his soldiers. When they crossed the frontier, hundreds fled to their homes; the infantry threw away their arms, the cavalry sold their horses for what they could get. Officers, as well as privates, gave way to despair, and several generals rode off to Paris. The fugitives forced the posts of the National Guards, spreading terror on all sides. The peasants, catching the contagion, concealed their goods, horses, vehicles, both from the enemy and their own countrymen. Nevertheless, the real soldiers sought out their colours, and wept with joy to find so many eagles saved. Jerome rallied those who had hurried to Avesnes; Soult, Morand, Pelet, gathered up the men of all arms and ranks who crowded under the guns of Philippeville. But Ney, unable to find his late chief on the frontier, had hastened to Paris. It is a significant fact, that the beaten army believed the treason of the generals to have been the cause of their defeat and disgrace, so thoroughly were they imbued with the true imperial spirit. The men, rallied at Avesnes and Philippeville, and reduced to some order by Soult, d'Erlon, and Reille, marched upon Laon; and there, on the 22nd, they mustered some 20,000 strong. Grouchy's corps, as we have said, saved by his skill from capture and destruction, and preserved almost intact, was directed to march on Soissons. At this time the Allies were,—Wellington, at Le Cateau Cambresis; Blucher, at Chatillon sur Sambre. On the 23rd of June they met at the latter place to concert a plan of operations. Two projects were before them: either to move in a mass upon Laon, and press upon the front of the rallied French army, or to disregard the corps of Soult

and Grouchy, gain the right bank of the Oise, cross that river below its confluence with the Aisne, and cut off both corps from Paris. The latter plan was adopted. The Prussians formed the left column, and the British the right. A considerable force was to remain in the rear, to besiege or blockade the frontier fortresses between the Scheldt and Moselle, which the allied commanders could not wholly neglect. General Kleist had already marched upon Sedan and Bouillon. Wrede's Bavarians, having crossed the Rhine on the 19th at Oppenheim and Manheim, were, on the 23rd, in possession of the bridges of the Sarre. One Austrian corps, under the Prince of Wirtemberg, had that day passed the Rhine at Gemersheim; another was ready to pass that river near Basle; and the head of the immense column of Russians was on the right bank at Manheim, awaiting the order to enter the Palatinate. Thus the greater part of the combined forces of the coalition were in movement upon Paris. On the 24th, when the troops of the fourth British division carried Cambrai by escalade, the allied commanders received a message from Paris which brought into striking relief the reality of their success. They were informed that Napoleon had abdicated in favour of his son, and that a provisional government had been formed; and they were asked to agree to an armistice pending the negotiation of a treaty of peace!

§ 2. *Napoleon Deserts the Army.*

Napoleon, on arriving at Philippeville, halted there for a few hours. He sent orders to Rapp on the Lauter, and Lamarque in La Vendée, to march with all speed upon Paris; and to Le Courbe to hasten with his small corps to Lyons. But, alas, Rapp was already hemmed in by the

Austrians and Bavarians; Lamarque, though near to success, had not yet even given the deathblow to the royalist insurrection; and Le Courbe was far from being in a position to make a safe march upon Lyons. At Philippeville, also, Napoleon dictated two letters to Joseph, one intended for the Council of Government, the other for Joseph himself. It need hardly be said that the latter alone disclosed an approximation to the truth. Indeed, at this moment Napoleon does not seem himself to have formed a just conception of the evil that had befallen him. He supposed that he could still collect 150,000 regular troops, that the depôts would furnish 50,000, and the Fédérés and National Guards 100,000; giving a total of 300,000 men. He would call out 300,000 conscripts, and decree a levy *en masse* in Dauphiny, the Lyonnais, Burgundy, Lorraine, and Champagne. In three days he would be at the head of 50,000 men, and with these he would occupy the enemy and give Paris and France time to do their duty. These were vain dreams, having no solid foundation in the world of fact. The power to call up myriads of armed men had departed from him. "Tell me," he wrote, "what the Chambers think of this horrible *échauffourée!*"

What did they think in the Chambers? At that moment they were in hot discussion upon questions not palatable to the Imperialists. They had heard of the passage of the Sambre, of the desertion of Bourmont, of the victory at Ligny. On the 18th, while Napoleon was in mortal strife with Wellington and Blucher, the cannon of the Invalides resounded in honour of the battle of the 16th. On the 19th and 20th, details of that action were published; on the 21st, nothing at all. Yet on the evening of the 20th, news of the "horrible *échauffourée*" had reached Paris. On that evening, writes M. Edgar Quinet, "several persons were assembled at the house of M. Carnot, and they vainly

asked him for news. To evade these importunate questions, Carnot went to a card-table and sat down with three of his friends. He, from whom I have this story,[1] sat opposite the Minister. By chance he raised his eyes and looked at Carnot; he saw his serious countenance, furrowed, inundated with tears. The cards were thrown up; the players rose. 'The battle is lost,' cried Carnot, who could contain himself no longer." The news spread through Paris; the shock was given; the waiters upon Providence were terrified; the Imperialists enraged; the faubourgs agitated. "Dans le premier moment on refusa à croire; ce fut ensuite une anxiété cruelle; puis une morne stupeur."[2] Victory had abandoned the eagles; at the very moment when Carnot wept the loss of a battle, Napoleon had abandoned the army; and France was at length prepared to abandon him.

Quitting Philippeville, leaving to Soult the task of rallying the wandering soldiers in Laon, Napoleon, accompanied by Bertrand, Drouot, Gourgaud, Flahault, Labédoyère, drove to Laon in carriages belonging to Soult, and arrived there on the evening of the 19th. On the morning of the 20th, Napoleon held a consultation with his officers, and the question debated with marked eagerness was—should the Emperor remain with or abandon the army? Could there be a more humiliating confession of defeat? The very question was a mark of weakness. It is true that there may be doubts respecting the true place of an Emperor at such a crisis of his fortunes, but there can be none as to the true place of a General. Napoleon began by declaring that he would remain with the army. With

[1] M. de Gerando.

[2] At first this report was not believed; then followed a period of cruel anxiety, succeeded by a gloomy stupor.—*Vaulabelle.*

12,000 men he would check his foes, give Grouchy time to arrive in his rear, and France time to "turn round." Flahault supported him in this soldierlike resolve. But Napoleon was no longer the master of his own will, or the wills of others. When he was reminded that he had seen with his own eyes the complete defeat of his army, that the soldiers had neither arms nor ammunition, that he had no artillery, that Grouchy had probably been destroyed, and that all the roads to Paris were open to the Allies; when —and these considerations made a deeper impression on him—when he was told that if he remained with the army, the Parisians would believe he was dead or surrounded; and that then they would not fight; whereas his presence in Paris would suffice to control his enemies and fill the people with fresh courage—then his noble resolve to remain with his devoted soldiers melted away. "Well," he said, his better judgment still revolting, "I will go to Paris; but you make me commit a folly; my true place is here." So low he had fallen that he could perceive the right and yet follow the wrong course. He no longer relied upon his own judgment: his foresight, his sagacity, his will had become obscured and weakened. He reeled to and fro in doubt on the brink of political ruin, blown about by the contrary blasts of a council of war composed of his personal adherents. Except a monarch in his strength, abusing his mighty power, there is no more painful spectacle than a monarch in his weakness, the sport of doubt and fear. The Duc d'Enghien, Hofer, Palm, Queen Louise, Empress Josephine, were about to be avenged.

§ 3. *Napoleon at the Elysée.*

Having at length resolved to fly to Paris, Napoleon finished the lying bulletins which are his record of the

battles of Ligny and Waterloo; sent officers towards Avesnes and Guise, and other places, to hasten the retreat of the stragglers upon Laon; and gave the command of the army to Soult. Then he drove to Paris, travelling all night, and alighted at the Elysée in the morning of the 21st. Hence the astounding news of the rout of the army in Belgium, and the still more astounding news of the arrival of Napoleon in Paris, were spread through the great city almost simultaneously, and stirred to the depths its restless and volatile population. "Twice before Napoleon had suddenly returned to Paris—from Moscow, from Leipsic, and each time alone, without an army." Thus had he again presented himself. Wearied out with the pains of the flesh and the spirit, Napoleon declared he could do no more, and that he required rest; but there is no rest for men upon whose words and acts, in a moment of supreme danger, depend the safety of an Imperial crown, and the foundations of an Imperial dynasty. Received by Caulaincourt, Napoleon first complained of his physical sufferings, and then described rapidly his intentions. He would call together the two Chambers, recount the "misfortunes" of the army, demand the means of saving the country, and then depart for the camp. His tried counsellor could give him no comfort. His misfortunes were already known; the Chambers were more hostile than ever; perhaps they would not grant the powers he demanded. "It would have been better had you not quitted the army; in the army alone is your strength and safety." Joseph and Lucien arriving, corroborated the fears of Caulaincourt; and Napoleon, devoid of a fixed purpose, once more determined to take counsel ere he decided. During the time in which he sought the rest denied him, ministers, high functionaries, officers, crowding to the saloons of the Elysée, greedy for news of the campaign,

were horrified by the picture of the rout drawn by those officers who had followed Napoleon from the battle-field to Paris; and they quitted the palace of the fallen Emperor only to spread abroad the fearful tale.

At length Napoleon reappeared, and sat face to face with his counsellors—the discrowned Joseph, Lucien faithful and "good at need," the cunning and treacherous Fouché, the high-minded but wearied Caulaincourt, the facile Regnault de St. Jean d'Angely, the brutal Decrès, the patriotic Carnot, and other men of mark in the Imperial Court. Having caused the Waterloo bulletin to be read, Napoleon, assuming somewhat of his ancient style, set forth in exaggerated language the still remaining resources of the Empire. He counted on the return of Grouchy, on the speedy rallying of the army. In five or six days he would have, he said, 65,000 men at Laon; by the 1st of July, 90,000; by the 10th, Rapp and Lamarque would be in Paris, and the Emperor would dispose of 130,000 men, and an abundant artillery. The Allies, compelled to blockade the fortress, would have at most only 80,000 men in hand, would have to wait for the Austrians and Russians until the 20th of July; but by that time Paris would be fortified completely, armed and garrisoned by 100,000 men; the French army in a central position would have every advantage; Suchet and Le Courbe would be before Lyons with 30,000 men; and the fortresses would be able to resist a siege. Hence the disaster at Waterloo could be repaired; but to effect this would require character, energy, firmness, on the part of the officers, the Government, the Chambers, the whole nation. This was a showy but delusive picture of the actual state of affairs, which did not impose upon all those present. Here, then, was the machinery of action, what was the motive power? Napoleon, after a moment of silence, described it in these words:—"To save the

country I have need of a *temporary dictatorship*. I might take it, but it would be more useful were the Chambers to give it to me." The Council was struck dumb; the Ministers turned their eyes from the face of the Emperor; there was an oppressive silence. Napoleon was forced to solicit the opinions of his ministers. Moved by the Emperor's appeal, Carnot was for declaring the country in danger, decreeing a levée *en masse*, and a state of siege, as if France were still the France of '93! Caulaincourt, in cold language, counselled union between the Sovereign and the Chambers. Fouché said the Emperor could not save France without the aid of the Chambers, and that aid he could only obtain by acting in good faith. Decrès thought an evil disposed Chamber might be put away. Regnault, feeling his way, hinted at some great sacrifice that the Chambers might require. "Speak out," replied Napoleon; "they desire my abdication?" Regnault answered that he believed they did; and added, that *perhaps*, if the Emperor did not offer to abdicate, the Chambers might dare to demand his abdication. To this pass it had come! But Lucien, enraged at this frankness, advised that the whole country should be declared in a state of siege, and Carnot once more supported the Imperial design. Napoleon, encouraged by Lucien and Carnot, recapitulated what he called the immense resources of the country, forgetting how he had drained those resources to the lees to sustain a decade of aggressive wars. The council yielding to his personal influence, still so vast, silenced the doubtful and proceeded to grant all that the Emperor demanded; and even discussed the momentous question—in what costume he should appear before the Chambers to announce their doom!

Suddenly a messenger arrived, a note was handed in. The penmen, recording minutes and drawing up decrees, ceased from their labours. And not without reason; for

a few sentences, a little energy, spoken and displayed elsewhere, had overthrown the work of the whole morning, and rendered their decrees waste paper. They were these—the Chamber of Representatives had declared themselves in permanent session. Any attempt to dissolve the Chambers was denounced as high treason. *Whoever* made the attempt should be declared a traitor, and judged as such. The Ministers were invited to attend the Assembly. These resolutions, unanimously adopted by the Chamber on the motion of Lafayette, were at that moment about to be placarded all over Paris. They were the fruit of the just suspicion that Napoleon would repossess himself of absolute power, and, as we have seen, they only anticipated by a few moments his determination to make the attempt. Lafayette had learned from Fouché and Regnault what were the designs of the Emperor; and he had resolved to be first in the field. It was an act of daring, an act of revolution—for the Emperor had a constitutional right to dissolve the Chambers if he pleased; the Chambers had no legal right to revive the precedent of the famed *Séance du Jeu de Paume*. But at this moment, legality was the last thing likely to intrude into the Hall of Representatives or the saloons of the Elysée. It was simply a contest of will, and in this contest the will of the Parliament prevailed.

Napoleon perused attentively the resolutions. Once more his will wavered to and fro, and, as if he were thinking aloud, he said, "I ought to have adjourned this Chamber before I quitted Paris—they are about to destroy France!" And then rising from his seat, he remembered the words of his aide-de-camp, and exclaimed, "Regnault did not deceive me. I will abdicate if it is necessary." But the words had hardly fallen from his lips when he clung to a new hope. "Before deciding, however, let us see what will come of all this." Thereupon Regnault was sent in

haste to quiet the Representatives, and Carnot with a similar mission to the Peers. Fouché reminded him that this might not satisfy the Chamber, since they had required the attendance of the Ministers. "They have no right," Napoleon broke in, "to demand anything of the kind; I forbid you to go." Fouché, it is said, immediately found means to communicate this speech to the leaders of the opposition.

Regnault was received in silence by the Representatives, and silence followed the delivery of his message, that the Emperor would confer with the Chambers on the means of saving the country. But he was quick to perceive the temper of this assembly, and when he returned to the Elysée he did not fail to express his fears. This gave rise to new debates; and during the sharp encounters between Lucien, Fouché, and Caulaincourt, Napoleon sat silent, absorbed in his own thoughts. Quickly came ill news: the Peers had adopted Lafayette's revolutionary resolutions; a second time the Ministers were peremptorily ordered to appear; if they did not obey there was loud talk of the deposition—the arrest of the Emperor. When he became aware of these portentous resolves, Napoleon, whose moral courage was now enfeebled, suddenly gave way, and he directed the Ministers to obey the order; but at the same time he intrusted Lucien with the task of reading his message and answering objections. The concession came too late.

Lucien and the Ministers entered the Chamber, and, at his formal request, strangers were directed to withdraw, that what the Imperial Commissary had to tell might be told in secret. Lucien, received in silence and listened to in silence, described the measures which the Emperor deemed necessary for the safety of the State, and requested the Chamber to nominate five Commissioners to co-operate

with the Ministers in securing the public safety. It was twilight, and the hall was only illuminated by two flambeaus placed near the president Lanjuinais.

Lucien's discourse was followed by an uproar like those often heard before (and, alas, since) in the French House of Commons. Scores of members, rushing to and fro in the dimly lighted room, were seen and heard speaking at once. The dominant tone rising above the tumult of their riotous exclamations was the same—"Napoleon is the sole obstacle to peace; let him go." Lucien strove in vain to persuade, to domineer, to terrify; but those he addressed remembered a parliamentary scene in which, years before, Lucien had played a conspicuous part, and his arguments, his menaces, his reproaches only served to feed the fire of hostility now flaming around him, He pleaded for Napoleon. If they abandoned him they would destroy the State, break their oaths, and inflict a stain upon the national honour. "*You* accuse us," retorted Lafayette, "of failing in our duty, our honour, towards Napoleon. Have you forgotten what we have done for him? Have you forgotten that the bones of our children, our brothers, attest everywhere our fidelity—on the sands of Africa, on the banks of the Guadalquiver, the Tagus, the Vistula, in the frozen deserts of Moscovy? In ten years three millions of Frenchmen have perished for a man who desires again to struggle against Europe! We have done enough for him. It is our duty now to save the country." A new tumult broke out, and raged with greater violence; the deputies employed extreme language, but the moment had not come for extreme measures. A proposal to send a commission to Napoleon, with the message, that if he did not abdicate he should be deposed, was not put to the vote, and the Chamber contented itself for the present with a smaller measure—the nomination of a commission to confer with the Ministers.

But Lucien was told, that if Napoleon did not abdicate, his deposition would be moved on the next day, at a public sitting. Lucien next resorted to the Peers, and they, without debate, simply named their Commission.

So far the events of this exciting day had been adverse to Napoleon's pretensions. The Chamber had proved itself to be the only vital power in the State; but the Deputies retired from the struggle, uncertain what the night might bring forth. Would Napoleon have recourse to violence—would there be a Chamber in the morning? Nor were their apprehensions groundless. Lucien, returning to the Elysée, told his brother that he must dissolve the Chamber or abdicate, and Lucien advised a dissolution. Napoleon quitted the palace in an undecided mood, and went into the garden to confer with Benjamin Constant; and, as they walked up and down, the crowd outside—as crowds will in days of great excitement—cried frantically, "*Vive l'Empereur!*" "Ah," said he, "if I willed it, if I permitted it, the rebel Chamber would not exist an hour; but the life of a man is not worth this price. I did not return from Elba that Paris might be inundated with blood." Upon which incident a caustic Frenchman remarks that the Emperor knew too well that the mob, which has sometimes destroyed, has never been able to defend or to save a single power. Napoleon, who had shattered the sections with an opportune "whiff of grapeshot," was not the man who could become the hero of a popular insurrection. If he dissolved the Chamber, his instruments would be soldiers whom he could command, not a mob over whom, once let loose, he could exercise no control. There was no danger in store for the Chamber. Napoleon saw as clearly as Lucien that he must dissolve or abdicate. He declared it was his duty, his right, to dismiss the Deputies, rebels against the law and against him; but in estimating the forces opposed to him, he found

that he must waive his right and neglect his duty, and for once obey and not command. "But," said he, "it is not Liberty which deposes me, it is Waterloo—it is Fear." Waterloo gave the opportunity, but a French historian finds one cause, other than fear, for Napoleon's overthrow. "The 18th Brumaire," says M. Edgar Quinet, "now overwhelmed Napoleon; and, as the result of a supreme justice after defeat, he endured himself all the humiliation and the reverses which he had inflicted on free institutions in the hour of his prosperity. On the 21st of June, 1815, and more especially on the morrow, that same assembly of Five Hundred, freely elected, which was believed to have been dispersed and to have disappeared since 1799,[1] rose again from its ashes, with its old anger and desire of retaliation. In a word, they caused the master who had dispersed them to disappear and to be no more seen. Justice was done, but at the same time liberty perished with independence, so true it is that days like the 18th Brumaire, when the conscience of a nation gives way, leave after them, sooner or later, ruin and disaster for those who make such days, and for those who submit to or applaud them."

About eleven o'clock on that summer evening, when the Allies were just over the frontier, there were assembled in the Hall of the Council of State, in the Tuileries, the Ministers, the Commissioners chosen by the Chambers, and Lucien.[2] Cambacérès presided over this Imperial

[1] 9th November, 1799.

[2] The Ministers of departments were Cambacérès, Caulaincourt, Carnot, Davoust, Decrès, Fouché, Gaudin, and Mollien; the Ministers of State were, Boulay de la Meurthe, Defermon, Merlin de Douai, Regnault de St. Jean d'Angély. The Commissioners for the Peers were Count Andréossy, Count Boissy d'Anglas, General Dejean, and Count Thibeaudeau; those for the Representatives were Lanjuinais, Lafayette, Dupont (de l'Eure) and General Grenier.

Committee of Public Safety, which passed the night in sterile debates. The Ministers endeavoured to restrict the discussion, and more especially action, to simple measures of national defence. Lafayette and his allies went further. They desired that negotiations for peace should keep pace with the steps taken to maintain a defensive war, and, speaking in the name of the Chamber, Lafayette demanded *every* sacrifice short of constitutional government and the integrity of the country. The Ministers, Fouché excepted, were not yet prepared to support so sweeping a proposal. Lafayette insisted, and at length moved that the whole body should wait upon Napoleon, and tell him formally he must abdicate. Cambacérès, wise in his generation, refused to put the motion to the vote. Lafayette, who did not flinch from his work, proposed also that, as the enemy would not treat with Napoleon, the two Chambers should nominate negotiators to treat for peace in their name. He gained a partial victory, for the committee agreed to a proposition of the Ministers that the Emperor should be required to permit the Chambers to nominate plenipotentiaries charged with the duty of negotiating directly with the Coalition.

The concession only emboldened Lafayette. As day was breaking he told the Ministers that the measure would not be accepted by the Chambers, and that he, for one, should denounce it. And with this lame conclusion, embodied in formal words, the Twenty-one went their way. It was obvious, even to Lucien, that the end of the reign of Napoleon I. was near at hand.

The Chamber met at an early hour in an angry mood. Fifteen hundred National Guards on duty around its doors were the signs of its fears and its determination. The excitement of the Deputies had infected the public; the galleries were full, and the excluded grouped them-

selves outside. Within the Chamber there was fierce and vehement tumult, aroused by the absence of President Lanjuinais, and the delay in presenting the report of the Commission. In vain they were told that the report was not ready; they did not believe it; and they solaced their impatience by resolving to abstain from any business until the report was presented.

They had reason for their fears. Napoleon had called another Council. At the Elysée, Lucien was again pressing his brother to take 6,000 men of the Imperial Guard, and finish with the Chamber. Again doubt, vacillation, uncertainty prevailed. Even Carnot gave way before the hostility of the Deputies. Here were two powers in presence; each was well informed of the spirit, views, wishes, opinions of the other, for Regnault ran to and fro, busied in reporting to the Deputies the proceedings at the Elysée, and at the Elysée the proceedings of the Deputies. But while the boldness, the passion, the unanimity of the latter were augmented by the knowledge of Lucien's projects, the courage of the Emperor and his counsellors decreased in proportion. Napoleon, who took no part in the debates, and seemed quite exhausted, at length agreed to the resolution embodied in the report; he consented that Commissioners should be named by the Chambers to treat for peace. This concession was wrung from him by the declaration of the Commissioners that the Chamber would wait no longer. Forthwith the Commissioners hastened to the Chamber, which had been four hours fuming in expectation. Yet when General Grenier read a report, falling so far short of its desires, the Chamber relapsed into a state of uproar, and the abdication of the Emperor—"the sole obstacle to peace"—was again vehemently demanded. Regnault entered in the midst of one of these harangues, and, interrupting the speaker, M. Duchesne, declared,

through the President, that before three o'clock the Emperor would send a message fulfilling all the desires of the Chamber. "Why so late?" was the fierce commentary. "We have only one course to adopt," cried Duchesne; "engage the Emperor to declare his abdication." "Yes, yes, agreed!" was the cry that arose on all sides. Amidst the horrid din, President Lanjuinais declared that the safety of the country was in the report of the Commission. "No; only in abdication," shouted a stentorian voice. "True," added Lafayette; "and if abdication is delayed, I will propose deposition!" These interjections express the sentiment of the moment. The full dramatic effect of the sitting, however, had not yet been reached. General Solignac moved that five members should wait on the Emperor and tell him flatly how urgent it was that he should decide. This seemed acceptable; but the general added to the peremptory character of his motion by an amendment. He thought it decorous that the Chamber should give the Emperor Napoleon *one hour* to decide. "One hour, and no more," cried Lafayette, pointing to the clock. Yet the Deputies did not see the terrible force of this ultimatum, and again a tumult arose. Then the general said, with grim and acrid humour, "Can't we save the country and preserve the honour of the Emperor? If I asked you to wait until to-morrow, you might oppose me; but—*one hour!*" The appeal was only half effective, for the President had to call for a division to ascertain whether an hour of grace should be accorded to Napoleon Bonaparte. The motion was carried. No incident, throughout this dramatic revolution, more accurately measures the depth to which the Emperor had fallen.

During this time Napoleon remained at the Elysée with his brothers and his Ministers, unable to arrive at any conclusion. Sometimes sitting, sometimes walking about the

room, silent, abstracted, thoughtful, he did not appear to heed the talk going on around him touching dissolution and abdication, His troubled features were the index of a disturbed, an anxious mind—

"Willing to wound and yet afraid to strike."

He seemed to be waiting for a fortunate moment, for a lucky turn of events, for some unforeseen accident, which would give him rule and dominance once more. He clung tenaciously to power, yet he took no active measures to grasp it firmly. From this frame of mind he was aroused for a moment by news from the army. Grouchy, he learned, had evaded the Prussians, and had placed his column beyond their reach. A flash of courage crossed his mind. "You see all is not lost!" he exclaimed, and forthwith sent Davoust to the Chambers with an exaggerated statement from the frontier. The Guard had rallied at Avesnes; 20,000 men were between that place and Laon; Grouchy had beaten the Prussians, and had retreated with 35,000 men; Soult was at Philippeville; there were 60,000 men in arms, and 10,000 more, with 200 guns, might be sent from Paris. Davoust, returning from the Chamber, reported that the Deputies would not listen to him. Thus another chance disappeared. Regnault entered, described the scene he had witnessed in the Chamber, and the ultimatum of General Solignac. "What!" cried Napoleon, bursting with rage, "they threaten violence! Then I will *not* abdicate. The Chamber is composed of Jacobins, whom I ought to have denounced and turned out; but the past may yet be repaired." Regnault besought him to give way, "I have never refused to abdicate," he said, softening. "but eight days after I have abdicated the foreigner will be in Paris." Lucien, Joseph, the Duke of Bassano, now conjured him to abdicate. General Solignac entered and

gave in his terrible offer of an hour's grace. Lanjuinais sent word that the Chamber would wait no longer, and threatened to declare him *hors la loi*. The game was up. "Write to these gentlemen, said the Emperor to Fouché, "and tell them to be quiet—they shall be satisfied." And he forthwith dictated to Lucien his abdication. He simply vacated the throne in favour of his son—then in the hands of the Austrians—and he prayed the Chambers to provide a Regency without delay. The document was forwarded to both the Chambers, and they sent a deputation to express the gratitude and respect with which they accepted the "noble sacrifice." But neither House would fairly recognize Napoleon II., although the Imperialists insisted that, unless Napoleon II. were recognized, the abdication was null; and, after fierce debates, instead of a Regency they set up a Commission composed of three deputies and two peers, charged with the executive functions of government. They were Fouché, Carnot, Grenier, Caulaincourt, and Quinette.

The ex-Emperor still for a few days remained in the solitude of the Elysée. On the 12th of June he had quitted Paris; on the 15th he invaded Belgium; on the 18th he fled from Waterloo; on the morning of the 21st he was once more in Paris; and ere sunset on the evening of the 22nd he had ceased to be Emperor of the French.

But the struggle was not yet over. During the sitting of the 23rd the Imperialists attempted to induce the Deputies to recognize Napoleon II., and Lucien, at the Elysée, renewed his exhortations to Napoleon to withdraw his abdication and have recourse to arms. At one moment, so mobile is a French assembly, the Imperialists nearly succeeded in carrying the direct recognition of the young Napoleon by acclamation. The counsels of Fouché and the oratory of Manuel led to a different result—a qualified

and delusive recognition of Napoleon II., by both Chambers, which practically decided nothing. However the Elysée might threaten, whatever the Chambers might determine, the Empire had ended.

The leaders of the movement which overthrew Napoleon thought that, in dethroning him, they had removed the *sole* obstacle to peace. But they forgot that Napoleon-worship involved many consequences; they forgot that Europe, when it determined to make neither peace nor truce with Napoleon Bonaparte, also determined to take securities from France against a future disruption of peace and a resumption of the policy in which the nation rejoiced so long as it was enforced by victory, illuminated by glory, and sweetened by the plunder of Europe. France had to make restitution and give securities. From her Napoleon had derived his power to overrun Europe; he claimed it as a merit that he had known and had appreciated the character of the French nation; it could not be permitted that she should secure the quiet enjoyment of the fruits of victory simply by sacrificing the victor. Hence the news of the abdication of Napoleon did not arrest the allied generals in their march.

§ 4. *March on Paris.*

It has been said, indeed, by Jomini, that the allied commanders determined to try and cut off Soult and Grouchy from Paris, because they had been informed by Fouché that Napoleon had abdicated. The error is repeated by later and more accurate French historians, although Charras, for one, had Wellington's Despatches before him. But the dates correct the mistake. It was on the 23rd, at Cattillon, that Wellington and Blucher agreed to march their armies by the right bank of the Oise, as far as Com-

piègne, Port St. Maxence, and Criel, turning the line of the Ainse et Oise. It was during the halt on the 24th that Wellington received, from Prince Frederick of Orange, then before Valencienes, a despatch in which was enclosed a copy of a letter from the governor of the place, requesting a suspension of hostilities, on the ground that Napoleon had abdicated in favour of his son. The Prussian marshal received like news from Ziethen, to whom General Morand had addressed a like demand. But at this moment the plan of the campaign was fixed and in process of execution. Wellington and Blucher hardly credited the report; "it appeared to me and Prince Blucher these measures were a trick; and at all events, were not calculated to satisfy the just pretensions of the Allies, and therefore that we ought not to discontinue our operations."[1] Hence, the plan of a rapid march upon Paris by Compiègne was not a consequence of the news of Napoleon's abdication. The real reason was the confidence of both chiefs that they had "given Napoleon his death-blow."[2] Yet that march was a bold measure, for Wellington has declared that he had got "not only the worst troops, but the worst equipped army, with the worst staff, that ever was brought together."[3] But as he knew there was nothing to be beaten in France but the army, and as he believed the army to have been beaten already, he ventured boldly, and he ventured rightly.

The Allies, in their progress towards Paris, encountered no obstacles. Soult had not forseen an advance by the right bank of the Oise, and indeed so great were the confusion and moral discouragement in the French camps, and

[1] Wellington to Bathurst, June 25.
[2] Wellington to Uxbridge, June 23.
[3] Wellington to Bathurst, June 25.

so decided was the progress of the Allies, that we cease to wonder at the absence of ordinary precautions, much less skilful dispositions. Napoleon fell, and none filled the void he left. The keystone dropped, and the Imperial arch collapsed almost in silence. The Prussians, in three columns, formed the left of the combined army, and were in advance. Laon and La Fere resisted the detachments sent against them; but they captured Ham, and Sir John Byng, with the Guards, carried the maiden fortress of Peronne by storm. Soult, obtaining some glimpse of the project of the Allies, withdrew his head-quarters on the 23rd to Soissons, and there he was joined by Grouchy, who, by the orders of the new provisional government at Paris, relieved him of the command of the army. But the troops of both generals were still on the march, and did not arrive until the 25th and 26th. At this time the heads of the allied columns were, the British at Mattignies, on the Somme, pointing to Roye, and the Prussians at Noyon, pointing to Compiègne. Grouchy, eager to save the bridge at that place, sent D'Erlon to occupy it, and Ziethen, eager to seize it, had launched forward Von Jagow, with directions to make a forced march and anticipate the French. Thus there was a race for the bridge of Compiègne; the French moving along the left bank of the Aisne, the Prussians on the right bank of the Oise. Von Jagow won. On the 27th the French approached the place, but they recoiled before the fire of the Prussians, who had already reached and established themselves in this important passage. About the same time Bulow, coming from Ressons, occupied Pont St. Maxence and Creil, and when D'Erlon, guessing at what had occurred, retired by Verberie upon Senlis, he found Bulow's advanced guard across his path, and was compelled again to diverge from the road. Grouchy, informed by D'Erlon that the enemy had passed the Oise, directed Van-

damme not to lose a moment in retiring from Soissons upon Paris by Villers Cotterets, while he himself proceeded towards Nanteuil. Ziethen, however, had sent Pirch II. to Villers Cotterets, and the Prussians, while in the act of assailing the rear guard of Grouchy, were taken in flank and rear by Vandamme, coming up from Soissons. This combat on the early morning of the 28th was the only one that exceeded the proportions of a skirmish. Vandamme, finding himself separated from Grouchy, moved by La Ferté Milon, and Meaux, in all haste to reach Paris. Grouchy, falling back from Villers Cotterets, found Ziethen in Nanteuil, and turned off at once to Azy and Claye. Reille and D'Erlon managed to effect a junction at Bourget, where they halted on the evening of the 28th; Reille, says a French historian, having marched forty-eight miles during the day!—a remarkable proof of the vigour of the chase. On the evening of the 29th the wreck of the Army of the North had entered the lines of Paris, and the head-quarters of Blucher, eleven days after Waterloo, were at Gonesse, in front of St. Denis. Wellington, moving on the outer curve, had kept in rear of the Prussians. His advanced guard, on the 29th, was at Senlis, his rear at Gournay and Clermont, and his head-quarters at Le Plessis Longeau. Wellington rode up to the front during the evening, arriving just as Blucher was directing an attack which resulted in the seizure of Aubervilliers, a village in front of the canal of L'Ourcq, the most advanced outpost on the northern line of the defences of Paris.

§ 5. *Interregnum.*

During the week occupied by the Allies in marching from the frontiers of Belgium to Paris, events in that capital had moved with equal rapidity. Napoleon dethroned, was as

much an object of suspicion in Paris as in the camp of the Allies. In the Elysée, on the morrow of his abdication, he still dreamed of Empire. He was quite prepared to act as Emperor in the name of his son. His constant assertion was, that he alone could make head against the Allies; he alone could, at the price of his abdication, recover possession of his son, and instal him as Emperor. In this he was right and wrong; right, in thinking that no other man in Paris could hold his ground against the Allies; wrong, in thinking that he could ultimately succeed. Had the Chambers and the provisional government, seduced by his golden promises, restored him to the reality though not the name of power once more, battles would have been fought and victories won perchance, but defeat must have come, and instead of an almost bloodless capitulation there might, and probably would, have been a bloody sack of Paris. "Fate"—that is, the Imperial Fate, and big armies, were too strong even for him. And, indeed, there was fate, too, in the very air of Paris. Fifteen years of his reign as Consul and as Emperor had demoralized the whole realm. The Imperial system had rendered every public man distrustful of his neighbour, and all distrustful of him. He had taught many the virtue of a hypocritical submission to force, for when he was strong he had made all bow down before him, and now he was weak, they knew it, and ran before to meet the stronger. Thus, Lauriston was caught by Vivian's patrols driving towards Ghent. More than this: the demands of Napoleon's "insatiable ambition," and the agonies inflicted by the system of "Oriental despotism" which he had applied to France—the very words of his panegyrists—had created a host of implacable foes who watched, with restrained impatience, for the hour of deliverance. Debarred from the healthy habits of independent public life for three-fifths of a generation, taught

to despise, to ridicule, public assemblies, the men who entered the Parliament of Napoleon mistook the fever of excitement for the animation of health, and tumultuous demonstrations for dignified strength. They were inspired by one conviction, that it was time to terminate the imperial career of Napoleon. The answer of Lafayette to Lucien—"We have done enough for him"—is the phrase that represents the dominant conviction of the Chamber, and, through the Chamber, of France. It is the counterpart of Napoleon's cry to Benjamin Constant—"They have abandoned me; they have abandoned me as readily as they welcomed me!" The delirium of the 20th of March gave place to the delirium of the 21st and 22nd of June; but it was the latter which represented, though in a fierce and eager form, the true sense of the country, revived by the lurid enlightenment which Waterloo threw over the whole career of their military idol. Face to face with the woes he had inflicted upon Europe and France, by an unrestrained indulgence of his "insatiable ambition," the halo of "glory" was eclipsed, and the man himself, who drew up the Acte Additionnel, declared that it was right to overthrow him, for he was, and had been, always a tyrant. For the moment, one passionate desire reigned—to be rid of the tyrant; as to the rest, let the morrow take care of itself. Threatened with the elder Bourbons, with the fate of Poland, they did not heed. So eager were they to depose, that their most honest chiefs did not give themselves time to read and understand the plain sense of the famous Declaration of the Sovereigns, at Vienna, on the 25th of March; and hence they fed on the delusive belief that the mere abdication of Napoleon would suffice to arrest the advance of the Allies. Yet it is not surprising that they should so misinterpret this declaration; for the Allies desired and intended to take securities against France, the principal accomplice

of Napoleon; and the nation which, through him, had domineered over half Europe, was not likely to adopt the painful conviction that it was her turn to drink the bitter waters of submission.

Hence, there were attempts to negotiate with Blucher, who said, roughly, he would have none of them; with Wellington, who, in courteous terms, gave them some advice, but told them that he could not accept what they had to offer; with the sovereigns on the Rhine, whose real answer the provisional government had not the courage to state to the Chambers.

The abdication of Napoleon gave Fouché the opportunity of seizing what remained of power and authority in Paris. The provisional government, consisting of himself, Caulaincourt, Grenier, Carnot, Quinette, named him president, and once invested with that office, he soon became master. With incredible audacity, mendacity, intrigue, activity, he bent all to his will. The truculent Davoust, the impulsive Carnot, the jaded Caulaincourt, the vain Lafayette, Soult with his vast common sense, were all pliant instruments in his hands. If the Chamber showed signs of independence, he amused them through his agents with equivocal declarations. A mob, excited by the fiery Bonapartists, beset the Elysée, and insisted on seeing Napoleon, and Fouché's intimation, that the great man would do well to retire into the privacy of La Malmaison, was obeyed three days after the abdication was signed. The Chambers decreed various measures of national defence; Fouché, all powerful with Davoust, now Minister of War and Commander-in-Chief, hindered their execution. Freissinet, a fiery soldier, drew up a vehement and vain-glorious declaration against the Bourbons; and Davoust was permitted to sign it, lest the army might revolt. Besides Fouché, indeed, there was no considerable power in Paris except the army, and the army

was all he had to dread, since Napoleon only threw out vain menaces which he had not the will, and probably not the power, to enforce. And for what was Fouché working? for the restoration of the Bourbons. Frenchmen have raised a monument of execration over the grave of this man, and he deserved it; but impartial history will ask the awkward question—what must have been the state of that nation in which, if only for a brief period, a Fouché could become all-powerful? He wrought so skilfully in that seething chaos of conflicting passions because it presented a condition of existence in harmony with his own faculties; but what must the medium have been in which a Fouché could sport with such astonishing success! It has been well said that it is not sufficient to be strong; your strength must have a proper relation to that which surrounds you. Fouché had that relation. The ascendancy of this man in Paris, at the end of the Hundred Days, is the most convincing proof of the degradation into which the worship of Napoleon had precipitated France.

Fouché, in fact, had made his calculations, and he saw, clearly, that the Restoration of Louis XVIII. would be the best thing for him, perhaps the only thing possible under the circumstances, excepting anarchy. The work of managing the mob, the younger generals who had not won their batons, the royalists, the doctrinaires, was precisely suited to his wily and unscrupulous character: and he performed it with a will. Take this picture of him by Edgar Quinet. Although it is drawn by no friendly pen, and although the lines and shadows are deepened by a righteous hate of villainy, yet on the whole the portrait is correct, for these lines and shadows were in the detestable original.

"In that shattered society one man alone remains standing, one man preserves his faculties; one man retains

presence of mind in the midst of the public stupor: it is Fouché. With everybody else intelligence is suspended; they are sunk in that stupefaction which follows the most violent blows of fate. Fouché alone thinks for every one, and every thought is a fraud; he alone acts, and every action is a snare. He is caught in his own traps, he laughs at it, and others laugh with him. His letters of connivance with the enemy are intercepted; he is amused at it. Surprised in the act of writing them he allows them to be read audaciously in the tribune; and those whom he betrays in these letters declare themselves satisfied with them. Fascinated, dazzled, stupefied—what shall we say—they clap their fettered hands at this triple-faced Judas. . . . Not only are his faculties not paralyzed, they are sharpened, they attain their greatest development; he has found his medium, his national element, in ruin, and he enjoys this agony of a people in its supreme calamity. His dull and faded language becomes coloured. What is Napoleon to him? *Un grand homme devenu fou.* And the proscription which he is meditating against the friends whose very hands he presses? *Un arbre touffu pour les garantir de l'orage.*

"See! That man rules everything; fills everything; that sharp, pale face which goes from one to another, behold, what remains now of that glorious France, the mistress of nations and of kings!"

If Fouché possessed the vast power here attributed to him, it was because the solution of the difficulty he had adopted was that which the active and passive majority really approved. Thus Davoust did not scruple to tell a deputation from both Chambers, who arrived when the Baron de Vitrolles, liberated by Fouché, was in close conference with the Commander-in-Chief, that the Duke of Otranto had sent M. de Vitrolles to him for the express

purpose of negotiating a treaty with the Allies and the Bourbons. Grouchy and Oudinot were at that moment in communication with the agent of the Royalists. The young generals at the head-quarters of Davoust were furious—but what of that? They had no chief. It is true that General Dejean proposed to seize Fouché, and shoot him in the streets—but who was to bell the cat? And when Carnot hinted to Fouché that he too was conspiring for Louis XVIII., "Well," answered Fouché, "accuse me, but mind I shall defend myself!" Marshal Davoust, too, said Carnot, has been "perverted." "What, the Marshall also?" answered the grim minister; "but he will be difficult to arrest; go and seize him in his head-quarters." Nor were Oudinot, Grouchy, and Davoust alone: Ney, Soult, and Mortier had arrived at the conclusion that the game of Imperialism was finished, and that further resistance was useless. The chosen men of the Chambers themselves admitted that the qualified recognition of the rights of Napoleon II. had been adopted solely for the purpose of appeasing the army. The army was the true constituency of the Empire, and in its last hours the army alone dreamed of striking in its defence. The Parisians, with some exceptions, were really indifferent to anything except the safety of themselves, their properties, and Paris, and were ready to welcome the stronger side. The shrewd old fellow encounted by an officer of Picton's division, who cried, "Vive le plus fort," and who, ready for every emergency, wore a "two-faced cockade," white on one side and tricolor on the other, is an admirable representative of the Parisians of 1815. There was abundance of talk: public activity was reduced to that commodity. The Deputies and Peers talked in their Chambers; the Marshals talked in the Tuileries; the young generals, not yet marshals, talked with more

vehemence—even of shooting Fouché—in their quarters; the people talked in the streets; Napoleon himself talked, when he got any one to listen to him, at La Malmaison. One man alone acted, and acted with a definite purpose and unswerving will, directly and indirectly, openly and secretly, by fair means and foul, and that one man was the Duke of Otranto. And, strangest fact of all, the thing no one even spoke of in those days was the Republic; the Parisians, for the moment, had forgotten the Republic, they had become weary of the Empire; they were almost indifferent to the Restoration.

It is no wonder that Fouché, with his keen activity and unprincipled dexterity, accomplished his definite purpose. The Restoration was advancing, under his management, with giant strides. King Louis, invited by Wellington, had followed the armies across the frontier, had lodged at Le Cateau until Cambrai was taken, then at Cambrai, and subsequently at Roye. A partisan of the Restoration, Wellington held the fixed opinion that permanent peace was not possible with a Bonaparte on the throne of France —that it was possible with Louis XVIII. alone—for that any other person, say the Duke of Orleans, if called to the throne, must be considered a usurper, and act as a usurper, and "must endeavour to turn the attention of the country from the defects of his title towards war and foreign conquests." When the Commissioners, sent by the Chambers, met him at Etrées, on the 29th, he frankly explained to them these opinions, and some of them said, "You are in the right." Wellington would not consent even to treat for a suspension of arms, except on condition that the French army retired behind the Loire, and that the National Guards should hold Paris until the King ordered otherwise. These Commissioners had hinted at the surrender of Napoleon, and, as long as he remained in

Paris, the Allies would not stop their operations. But, as we shall see, Napoleon fled to the coast, and that obstacle was removed, even while the Commissioners were waiting upon Wellington in the lines of the British army. Nevertheless, this first serious attempt at negotiation, coincident with the arrival of the Prussians before St. Denis, and the capture of Aubervilliers, failed. It was merely tentative, designed to ascertain the intentions of the King and of the Allies. At that very moment the Deputies were eagerly debating and adopting a new constitution!

§ 6. *Before Paris—Capitulation.*

The Allied Armies had marched without obstruction and without danger from Waterloo to the gates of Paris. Satisfied with having masked the barrier fortresses, they had turned every position and had compelled the wreck of the great French army to hurry by devious paths into the capital. The moment of danger had now come.

The works, projected by Napoleon, for the defence of Paris, had been partially executed. The Northern side had been covered with entrenchments, and armed with heavy guns. These lines extended from Charenton above, to St. Denis, below Paris. Touching the Seine at each extremity they formed the chord of the very irregular curve traced by the winding course of the river. Vincennes was the strong point on the right, the heights of Belleville and Romanville in the right centre, and from La Villette to St. Denis, the canal of L'Ourcq, or more properly the canal of St. Denis, offered a formidable obstacle. For the interior-bank of this water-way was lofty, and embrasures had been cut at intervals and armed with guns; and while St. Denis formed a strong defensive post on the left, the fortified heights of Montmartre served as

a redoubt in rear of the centre. All the barriers were protected by works, and a tête-de-pont covered the bridge of Charenton. The head-quarters of Davoust were at La Villette. On the left, or southern, bank of the Seine, however, there were no works, except two or three tracings for redoubts at Montrouge. That side of Paris was open. The question was how to reach it? There were, excluding the National Guard, not much to be trusted, and specially directed by its commander Massena to confine itself to the maintenance of order, between 70,000 and 80,000 soldiers in the capital, the greater part on the right bank of the river, the lesser on the left, at Montrouge. It is difficult to form an idea of the force at the disposal of the Allies, but it did not exceed, probably 100,000 men.

The works we have described stopped the progress of the Prussians. A strong reconnaissance along the line of the canal exposed the powerful character of the defences; and the Prussians were forced to contend themselves with the capture of Aubervilliers, the village in front of the canal. On the night of the 29th, they rested in position between the wood of Bondy and Stains, with the reserve at Dammartin and head-quarters at Gonesse. The nearest troops of the Anglo-Allied army were at Senlis. Wellington had ridden in the evening to confer with Blucher on the proposals of the French Commissioners and the future movements of the army; he had found the Prussians in the act of assaulting Aubervilliers, and he saw the formidable nature of the enemy's lines. He formed the opinion that Paris could not be attacked on that side without great loss of life and the risk of defeat. There were then three operations before the Allies—to persevere in the assault of the northern defences; to take up a position and await the coming of Wrede's Bavarians, then at Nancy; to cross the Seine below Paris and force

an entrance on the southern side. Both commanders agreed at once to dismiss the first project. There is some reason to believe that Wellington was inclined to adopt the second; but Blucher, always eager and audacious, insisted on the adoption of the third. A Prussian officer, intent on capturing Napoleon, had hastened, on the 28th, with a detachment of cavalry to the bridge of Chatou, within cannon-shot of La Malmaison; and the provident destruction of that bridge by General Becker, the warden of Napoleon, had alone prevented the success of the enterprise. Foiled at Chatou, the officer found that the bridge at St. Germain had not been destroyed, and occupying it at once, he communicated the fact to Blucher.

Here was a safe point of passage secured, more distant from Paris than Chatou, but still giving access to Versailles and the South side, and it was agreed that the Prussian army should accordingly cross the Seine at St. Germain. The dangers of the project were manifest to both commanders, certainly to Wellington. The Seine, with its deep loops, would sever the two armies from each other. If the co-operation of Wellington with Blucher were needed he must cross the river twice. The French, occupying a central position, with an abundant supply of bridges, might either leave a mere garrison to defend the North, while they fell with the bulk of their forces upon the Prussians before the latter had time to concentrate and defeat their columns in detail; or they might issue from their works and fall with superior forces upon Wellington, while Blucher was still on the line of march. These were great and evident dangers. But although, in a military sense, the projected movement of Blucher is held to be unjustifiable, in a political sense, as the result proved, it was not less wise than daring. For the allied commanders were well-informed of the state of opinion in

Paris. They knew that Napoleon had fled to the sea-coast; that Davoust, Fouché, nay, the Chambers themselves, desired to effect a political and not a military settlement. They knew that nothing paralyzes the arm of the soldier like divided councils among his leaders. Having little to dread really from the chief of the army, they believed, and rightly, that the apparition of the Prussians on the South bank of the Seine would shake the moral courage of the soldiers by making evident the want of heart in the cause on the part of their chiefs; of the politicians by showing them that they had no time to lose; and of the mob by cutting off one great source of its supplies. The Prussian project was therefore adopted for political and not military reasons.

The operation was begun with much circumspection on the 30th. Thielemann came up in the morning from Dammartin to Gonesse, and moved thence by Montmorency and Argenteuil to St. Germain. As the route beyond Argenteuil was visible to the French on the left bank of the Seine, Thielemann was to time his movement so that his progress from Argenteuil to St. Germain would be made in the dark. Ziethen followed at ten the some night, directing his column upon Maisons, lower down the river, where a bridge had been left undestroyed. During the 30th Bulow kept guard before the northern lines. On the morning of the 1st of July the whole of Wellington's army came up, and relieved Bulow, whose troops followed Blucher across the Seine, while the Anglo-Allied divisions took up a position between Richebourg and Bondy.

The hazardous march of Blucher to the South of Paris was known at an early period in the French camp, and the Bonapartist generals, rejoicing in the opportunity thus afforded, demanded vehemently to be led against the

enemy. Davoust knew scarcely what course to take. He desired to conclude an armistice, and had appealed both to Blucher and Wellington. The English general, as we have seen, fully aware of the dangerous position of both armies, and unwilling besides to expose Paris to an assault, had already consented, subject to the approval of Blucher, to sign an armistice on condition that the French army retired behind the Loire, and that Paris was given up to the National Guard. Blucher at first, however, refused to agree to any other terms than the surrender of Paris *and* the army, roughly warning Davoust not to devote another city to destruction, and asking him if he desired the maledictions of Paris, in addition to those of Hamburg! These insulting expressions did not divert the marshal from the fixed line of action agreed upon between himself and Fouché. But as he could not keep the army wholly inactive, and as he did not wish to see the Prussians advance without a check, he sent Excelmans with some infantry and a large force of cavalry towards Versailles. Colonel von Sohr, with three regiments of Prussian horse, directed to advance as far as the Orleans road, was met by the French cavalry, attacked and driven back, caught in an ambuscade, and cut to pieces. Unsupported, Excelmans found he could not keep his forward position, and he fell back nearer Paris. It it said that Davoust, yielding to the exhortations of Fouché, countermanded the order for the march of Vandamme in support of Excelmans. That may have been so, but it should be remarked that Vandamme himself had by this time become a half convert to the views of the majority who were willing to accept a restoration of the Bourbons; and it is doubtful besides whether he received any order.

While the action which resulted in the destruction of Von Sohr's horsemen was in progress, the Government held

a council to determine whether resistance were longer possible. Reluctant to assume the responsibility, they drew up a series of questions, and remitted them to a Council of War; and this council, meeting in the evening at La Villette, decided, after a long and sharp debate, practically that further resistance, though possible, was, under the circumstances, impolitic. These two councils, in short, served no purpose except that of demonstrating the existence of discord in the camp and bureau, and of giving support to Fouché and Davoust. For neither concealed his opinion that the only thing to be done was to open the gates to Louis upon the best terms they could obtain. On the 1st of July, then, the relative positions of all the parties were these—Wellington was in front of St. Denis; Blucher, regardless of the loss inflicted on Von Sohr, halted the corps of Ziethen and Thielemann near St. Germain, but determined to advance on Paris as soon as Bulow came up; Fouché was ready to capitulate, and only held back to secure better conditions; the Imperialists were maddened by inaction and tormented by suspicions of treason, but without a leader of mark, and without confidence in each other.

At dawn on the 2nd, Blucher moved his whole force from St. Germain towards Versailles. Davoust renewed his request for an armistice; but Ziethen replied that he dared not send such a request to Blucher, yet if the city and army would surrender, he would himself agree to an armistice. At the same time Wellington wrote from Gonesse to urge on Blucher the good policy of according an armistice, on conditions involving neither the surrender of the city nor the army; but Blucher still persevered. While fresh messengers with fresh solicitations were seeking the allied lines, Blucher marched directly on his way through Versailles towards St. Cloud, and Wellington, throwing a bridge

over the Seine at Argenteuil, immediately occupied several places on the right bank as far as Courbevoie and Suresne. The Prussians encountered but a feeble resistance, and by the night they had taken up a good position, stretching from Plessis Picquet, through Clamart, to Meudon and Molineau, with advanced guards in Chatillon and Issy, and the reserve at Versailles. The allied armies were now in military communication by the bridge of Argenteuil. At daylight on the 3rd, Vandamme renewed the fight, and continued it for several hours, vainly striving to drive the Prussians out of Issy, and causing some loss on both sides. Suddenly the action ceased—Blucher had consented to treat for a capitulation.

Both parties had made concessions. After the Council of War, Fouché felt more free to capitulate than ever, and gave Davoust full powers to treat. It has been seen that the Duke of Wellington was, on the 2nd, prepared to sign an armistice. He proposed that the French army should retreat beyond the Loire, that the military service of Paris should be committed to the National Guard, and that the allied armies should halt where they were. Blucher, whose passions influenced alike his political and strategic movements, had refused any terms short of the surrender of Paris and the army. The reasons adduced by Wellington, and the renewed solicitations of Davoust and Fouché for peace, made him relax his demands, and a compromise, granting more than Wellington, and less than Blucher, had insisted on, formed the basis of the negotiation. The palace of St. Cloud was selected as the scene of the final act; four o'clock was fixed upon as the hour of meeting; and in the interval the Parisians, uncertain of their fate, were grouped in the streets, and on the housetops and high places, looking for the outbreak of battle; the soldiers and young officers were fretting in their lines, and muttering treason;

and the Chamber of Deputies was debating the articles of a new constitution.

The Commissioners—M. Bignon, Count Guilleminot, and M. de Bondy, for the French; Baron Müffling, for Blucher; and Colonel Hervey, for Wellington—met at St. Cloud in the presence of the two Commanders-in-Chief, and drew up the Capitulation, or, according to Fouché's dexterous emendation, the Convention of Paris. It was understood, at the outset, that the instrument should be purely military, and should touch nothing political. Its main provisions were, that the French army should, within a specified time, march across the Loire; that the National Guard and the gendarmerie should take up the military duty of the city; that the actual authorities should be "respected as long as they existed;" that private property and public property should also be respected—save what related to war; that private persons should continue to enjoy all their rights and liberties without reference to past conduct; and that Paris should be placed in the hands of the Allies. The instrument professed to be simply an agreement for a suspension of arms between the English and Prussian armies on the one side, and the French army and city of Paris on the other. It was signed by the Commissioners, and ratified by Blucher, Wellington, and Davoust.

The object of this act was to place the French army in a position where it would be alike powerless in a military and political sense, to place the Government in the power of the Allies, and to remove any obstacle which might hinder the sovereigns from taking, in future, such securities as they deemed fitting. Hence the army, the only vital and turbulent power in France, was to be removed beyond the Loire. This concession was obtained from the French negotiators by the firmness of the allied generals. The French, also, desired to keep the plunder of nations which adorned

their galleries and museums. But both Wellington and Blucher emphatically refused to permit it. "I shall take from the museums everything Prussian," said Blucher. Wellington reserved the rights of the Allies of England.

Signed and ratified, this act of capitulation was communicated the same evening to the Provisional Government and to the Committees of the Chambers in secret session. The next day it was formally announced at the open sittings; the Deputies received it almost without remark, and continued their debates on the constitution. Half Paris knew scarcely what had happened; and, with some exceptions, the Parisians manifested a strange indifference. But the army, and the old soldiers known as Fédérés, Bonapartist to the core, broke out into murmurs, threatened to mutiny, and even sought a leader, yet could find none. One thing they did not forget to demand—their arrears of pay. Some enthusiasts broke their arms, others tore their uniforms; actual tumults arose in some quarters, but the National Guard sufficed to quell them. These outbursts of wrath, as a revolutionary writer admits, were the last throbs of the exhausted heart of France. On the 5th and 6th, the outposts and barriers were successively occupied. The French army was on the march towards the Loire, 70,000 strong, with 200 guns. The Chambers and the Provisional Government continued to sit day by day. On the 7th, the Allies entered Paris. Wellington only sent in a brigade, but Blucher paraded the greater part of his army through the streets. The trumpets brayed, the troops marched with fixed bayonets and drawn swords; the artillery, with loaded pieces and burning portfires. All the posts and bridges were occupied; the Provisional Government was expelled from the Tuileries; the Peers dispersed at the appearance of the Prussians; the Chamber of Deputies adjourned, to find the next morning its gates locked,

and a picquet of National Guards behind them. The actual authorities had been respected as long as they existed! On that day, the 8th, Louis XVIII. re-entered Paris; the white flag waved above the Tuileries; the institutions of the Hundred Days disappeared; above a million foreign soldiers stood upon the soil of France; the Restoration was an accomplished fact, and Fouché, the real French hero of the hour, was Minister of Police!

It does not enter into our plan to trace, in minute detail, the subsequent series of events which led to the exaction of securities from France, and the continuance of the occuation of her soil for three years. Our present task will be completed when the first Napoleon has been transported to St. Helena.

CHAPTER II.

NAPOLEON: LA MALMAISON; ST. HELENA.

§ 1. *Napoleon reluctant to Fly.*

WELLINGTON and Blucher were at Joncour and St. Quentin, and the French army was drawing hurriedly together about Soissons, covered by the Marne, when Napoleon, no longer Emperor, but henceforth "Napoleon Bonaparte," retired to La Malmaison, a country house on the left bank of the Seine, some seven miles from Paris. It was the property of Eugene Beauharnais and his sister Queen Hortense, bequeathed to them by the Empress Josephine; it was associated with the earlier splendours of Napoleon's career, with the triumphs of the First Consul; it was a connecting link between Marengo and Waterloo.

The army, what was left of it, was, as we have seen, still far from Paris. None knew, certainly not Napoleon, whether the Allies or the French would arrive first in front of the capital. Negotiations had already been attempted, and the chances of the army looked more than doubtful. Napoleon's first act on reaching La Malmaison was to dictate a farewell to that army, couched in the old Imperial strain. He sent it to Paris, with a request that it might appear in the *Moniteur*. No notice was taken of his request, and the address was not printed in the official journal. This was a keen

disappointment. Nevertheless he continued to believe that necessity or the army would compel the Government to send for him once more. In the midst of his reflections on the choice of an asylum, the thought ever uppermost was that he would not be obliged to fly. The Provisional Government, knowing how much depended on his speedy withdrawal, placed two frigates, then in the harbour of Rochefort, at his disposal, but forbad them to sail until safe-conducts had been obtained from the Allies; and in order to watch over his movements and facilitate his retreat to the West, General Becker was sent to La Malmaison, and appointed commandant of the Guard. When Becker arrived, Napoleon's first question was, "What are they doing, and what do they say at Paris?" The answer of Becker was calculated to raise his hopes; and to gain further information he sent Savary, Duke of Rovigo, to Paris, ostensibly to obtain passports from the Government, really to discover whether his hopes were well founded. Savary returned, bearing the most pressing exhortations from Carnot and Caulaincourt to the ex-Emperor, that he should depart forthwith. So eager at this moment were the executive for his departure, that they issued a minute authorizing the frigates to sail even without safe-conducts, and transmitted a passport, in which Napoleon figured as the secretary of General Becker! Yet, the same day the prohibition was renewed. In the meantime the army drew near to Paris, and officers, who rode over to La Malmaison, implored Napoleon to appear once more in the camp, and assume once more the leadership of his soldiers. Encouraged by this, Napoleon, on the 28th, distinctly declared that he would not go, but would remain at La Malmaison. It is easy to discern the secret of all these hesitations—he trusted that unforeseen events would place him again at the head of his army, and enable him to hold his own des-

tinies in his own hand. What he lingered for was a strong appeal from the Army. It did not arrive. In the very address sent to the Chamber by the Generals, Napoleon's name was not mentioned! But that, like the abdication, was a trick. Napoleon I. abdicated, thinking he should soon reappear as the General for Napoleon II.; the generals omitted his name, because they also desired to obtain their end indirectly.

The army had come up to the lines of Paris, the boom of the cannon aroused the dwellers in La Malmaison, but with the army had also come the enemy. Even now, while Napoleon, excited by the sounds of strife, declared he would remain and meet his fate at La Malmaison, a body of Prussian horse, intent on his capture, were within half a mile, riding up and down the right bank near Chatou, enraged to find the bridge burned. Davoust had foreseen this raid on the part of Blucher, and by his orders Becker and Gourgaud had caused the bridge to be destroyed. Yet there remained the bridge of St. Germain; if the Prussians seized that and swept round the curve of the river, what would become of Napoleon? The Provisional Government, now seriously alarmed lest the murderer of the Duc d'Enghien should fall into the hands of Blucher, again implored, entreated Napoleon to go without safe-conducts, since they could not be had. Duke Decrès and M. Boulay de la Meurthe were to hasten to La Malmaison, and see that he vanished in the direction of the road to Rochefort.

In spite of the proximity of the enemy, Napoleon still persisted in his resolution to stay where he was. "The best thing I can do," he exclaimed, "is to throw myself into the arms of my soldiers. My appearance will electrify the army; they will destroy the foreigners. When they know I am with them, ready to conquer or die, they

will do whatever you demand." But he added presently, "I cannot take on myself so great a responsibility. I ought to wait for the call of the people, the soldiers, the Chambers. Mais comment Paris ne me demande-t-elle-pas?" No; neither Paris nor the Chambers summoned him. But the soldiers?—what if they could have got to him or he to them! Davoust, however, had prepared for that contingency, by placing a secret cordon round La Malmaison, and instructing the commandant at Montmartre to hold a body of National Guards in readiness to countercheck the "Emperor."

§ 2. *Flight.*

In the midst of the exciting discussions at La Malmaison Duke Decrès and M. Boulay arrived soon after sunrise, and gave the Emperor the last order of the Provisional Government directing him to go forthwith. Napoleon, before he obeyed, played his last card. He had learned something of the relative positions of the armies; he had been inspired, it is said, by the sound of Blucher's cannon; and he directed Becker to hasten to the Provisional Government, to tell them that he desired to be appointed general, to win one victory as a basis of negotiation, and, that done, he promised to retire. Becker hastened on his errand, while Napoleon's war-horses were saddled, and he himself put on his battle-dress—green coat, white breeches, and long boots. In this costume General Becker found him, when, late in the afternoon, he returned to La Malmaison with a written refusal of Napoleon's last request. The die was cast, the game played out. The green uniform was replaced by the maroon coat of a civilian, and the cocked hat laid aside for a round one: the white breeches, the long boots, and the sword

disappeared. Napoleon had become a private person. He gave orders for his departure, and it was time, for the Prussian cavalry were at St. Germain, and Von Sohr was already on his way towards the left bank. Frustrated, wearied, powerless, Napoleon bade farewell to Hortense with some show of tenderness; embraced the friends who still clung to him; and, as the shades of evening fell, he was driving in a plain carriage, in company with Bertrand, Savary, and Becker, on the road to Rambouillet. Two other carriages followed, in one of which sat General Gourgaud, resplendent in full uniform. His design was to attract attention to himself in case of danger, and devote his life, if need were, to save that of Napoleon.

The hope of being recalled by the army kept Napoleon unquiet and eager for news from Paris. He halted at Rambouillet, and three times during the night Gourgaud was sent forth to watch for messengers spurring from the lines of the capital. They came not. The roads were deserted and silent. Napoleon's hopes were unfulfilled. How reluctantly he surrendered even the faintest chance of renewed power is shown by the fact that, although his safety, perhaps his life, depended upon his early arrival on the coast, yet he did not drive out of Rambouillet until late in the forenoon. Another long halt took place at Niort, where he arrived on the evening of the 1st, and where he remained until the 3rd of July. There were soldiers here, and as Napoleon stood at the window on the morning of the 2nd, one of them, recognizing him, raised a cry, and forthwith a crowd assembled, and insisted that the Emperor should appear. Napoleon would not show himself to the mob, but he received the officers of the garrison and the civic dignitaries, and listened with complaisance to the earnest exhortations of the soldiers. They urged him to hasten at once to Orleans, there to

rally an army for the defence of France. His answer to them was, "I am nothing; I can do nothing;" but he caused General Becker to write a report of all that had occurred, and send it to Paris. He had learned that the exit from Rochefort was barred by an English cruiser: news had come that Paris was still defended on the 30th. "If, in this situation," Napoleon said, "the English cruiser bars the way to our frigates, the Provisional Government can dispose of the Emperor as general, solely occupied with a desire to be useful to the country." On the 3rd Napoleon resumed his flight, silent and bowed down in thought, revolving in his vast mind projects for the future, dreaming of another 20th of March, while on that very day the Commissioners at St. Cloud were settling the details of the capitulation of Paris!

§ 3. *At Rochefort: Hesitations.*

Five days Napoleon lingered in Rochefort, now buoyed up by extravagant hopes, now harassed by a vagrant will, which passed lightly from resolve to resolve, entertained at once several schemes of escape, and adopted none. Here again came offers of devotion from the army—would he not concentrate the garrisons of the West and tempt once more the fortunes of war? Would he strive to gain the Gironde, and trust himself on board a corvette there ready to venture out to sea? Would he risk his fate in a Danish brig commanded by a Frenchman, or would he set forth in a perilous voyage in smaller craft manned by devoted crews? All this time Captain Maitland in the *Bellerophon* watched the roadstead, aware that he barred the road selected for the exit of Napoleon from France. While he was wavering and debating General Becker received positive orders to force him respectfully out of

Rochefort. Napoleon yielded, and on the 8th embarked in the boats of the *Saale*, to take up his abode in that frigate, thus quitting the mainland of France at the very moment when Louis XVIII. entered Paris. It is recorded, with what truth we know not, that just before he left Rochefort some Parisian newspapers were brought in and placed before him. The first thing which he saw in their pages was, "The capitulation of Paris!" and throwing down the journal he rushed into his chamber and locked himself in. Soon, half-stifled sounds were heard by those who listened breathlessly at the door. "Napoleon wept."

Another week was spent in this famous roadstead. Adverse winds and now two British men-of-war interposed between Napoleon and the professed object of his desire, the United States. More than one daring plan of escape was projected, discussed, half adopted, abandoned. It is doubtful whether Napoleon really wished to end his days in the Western Continent; it is doubtful whether he had not all along cherished the idea that the British nation, moved by a passionate admiration of his greatness, would compel the Government to give him an asylum. His views of England and the English people were founded upon false information, and his judgment was misled by his sense of his own importance into believing that his sole enemies in England were the British "oligarchy." Sheltered in England, what happy chances might not be in store for him? In conversation with Benjamin Constant at the Elysée, it is true, he ridiculed the idea of a residence in England, depicting with keen irony the fears and suspicions his presence there would arouse. But he let fall one phrase which may have been the key to his real thoughts. "I should compromise all the world," he said, and "à force de dire, voilà qu'il arrive, on me donnerait la tentation d'arriver." Now, to arrive—that is, arrive at

power once more—was the dominant thought of Napoleon from the moment when he signed his abdication to the moment when, nearly in despair, he went on board the *Bellerophon*. His abdication he regarded as quashed by the non-recognition of his son, and he held himself free to execute any feasible project calculated to restore his dynasty. Wherefore, then, it may be asked, did he not seize one of the many opportunities of raising his flag either in the head-quarters of the Guard at Paris, or behind the Loire? He has said, and it has been said for him, that he was withheld by a hate of civil war—a futile excuse on the lips of the hero of the journey from Elba to Paris. He was withheld by a negative but most potent force—an exhausted Will.

During his last week of *quasi*-freedom, his devoted friends, Las Casas and Bertrand, had visited Captain Maitland on board the *Bellerophon*, had endeavoured to persuade him that Napoleon's fortunes were not so desperate as they appeared to be, and had sought to obtain some kind of pledge of safety for the ex-Emperor. They failed: Maitland could give no pledges; he could not permit Napoleon to quit Rochefort under a safe-conduct or in a neutral ship. With a full knowledge of the uncertainty of his fate, without any guarantee whatever, Napoleon gave himself up to the commander of the *Bellerophon*. He took that course as the least of three evils—capture by the British if he tried to break the blockade; capture by the Bourbons or Allies if he remained in Rochefort roads; whereas if he surrendered voluntarily, might he not be permitted to reside in England—would not the sojourn of the "noblest" enemy of England on British soil, flatter the pride of the Government and nation; would not both welcome him with all the respect "due" to his name? The course suggested

by these considerations was adopted because it presented a less gloomy prospect than a perilous flight in two fishing boats, or seizure by the Bourbons; and how near the latter was is shown by the fact that the captains of the two French frigates hoisted the white flag before Napoleon had climbed the sides of the British man-of-war. It was under these circumstances that Napoleon surrendered, and yet he had the audacity to declare that he ought to be regarded as the "guest," not as the prisoner of Great Britain! The letter to the Prince Regent, which he entrusted to Gourgaud, announcing his intention to take up, unbidden, his residence in England as her guest, is an expression of human egotism which reaches to the sublime.

"Royal Highness," he said, "exposed to the factions which divide my country, and to the enmity of the great European Powers, I have ended my political career; and I come, like Themistocles, to seat myself at the hearth of the British people. I put myself under the protection of its laws, which I ask for at the hands of your Royal Highness, as the most powerful, the most constant, and the most generous of my enemies.—NAPOLEON."

There are two parties to every pact, and, in war, it is not admissible for one party, especially the weaker, to dictate conditions. Yet this is exactly what Napoleon did. He surrendered, practically, to the officer of a nation with whom he was at war. If, he said, he were permitted to go to the United States, he would go there with pleasure; if not, he would voluntarily go to England as a private person to enjoy the protection of British law. He thus attempted what, in his situation, was an undue assumption —to dictate the conditions of his reception. Captain Maitland did not mislead him; Admiral Hotham did not mislead him; neither gave him any pledge of security.

To escape from the clutches of the officer, Captain de Rigny, sent by the Bourbons to arrest him, Napoleon risked, of his own free-will, whatever might betide him in England. It was a choice of evils, nothing more nor less.

§ 4. *Retribution.*

Napoleon, attired in his favourite military costume, went on board the *Bellerophon* on the 15th of July, and on the 24th she anchored at Torbay. Gourgaud had not been allowed to land and deliver the letter already cited. Napoleon was not allowed to land. Transported to Plymouth harbour, he remained for six days uncertain of his fate, believing that he would be received as the guest of England until the last, and delighted to see the swarms of boats which thronged around the *Bellerophon*, laden with persons anxious to catch a passing glimpse of the devotee of glory and empire. When, on the 31st of July, he learned that his future home was to be on the lonely rock of St. Helena, he protested against the sentence, persisting in the assertion, totally unfounded, that he was the guest, not the prisoner of England. The sentence on Napoleon was not the sentence of England alone. The Allied Powers passed that sentence upon the public delinquent, whom four months before they had declared to be an outlaw, delivered over to public vengeance. A voluntary surrender does not restore an outlaw to the enjoyment of the rights he has forfeited. He has nothing to depend upon but mercy. Napoleon, when he ensnared and kidnapped the Duc d'Enghien, who was not an outlaw, did not show any mercy to his prisoner. The Allied Sovereigns, when Napoleon placed himself in their power, did not shoot him in a ditch; they spared his life; they allowed him to live, and he lived long enough to gratify

his love of vengeance, by dictating the lying literature of St. Helena.

The *Bellerophon* put to sea on the 4th of August, and on the 7th Napoleon was transferred to the *Northumberland.* On the 5th, the ex-Emperor composed what a French author complacently styles "an anathema which will cling to England even when her oligarchy is destroyed." This piece of writing, bearing the head "Protest," is one of the most characteristic productions of Napoleon.

"I hereby protest solemnly," he cries, "in the face of heaven and mankind, against the violation of my most sacred rights, in disposing, by force, of my person and my liberty. I came freely on board the *Bellerophon;* I am not a prisoner; I am the guest of England. I came on board even at the instigation of the Captain, who told me he had orders from the Government to receive me and my suite, and conduct me to England, if agreeable to me. I presented myself with good faith to put myself under the protection of the English laws. No sooner was I on board the *Bellerophon* than I was on the hearth of the British people. If the Government, in giving orders to the captain of the *Bellerophon* to receive me and my suite, only wished to lay a trap for me, it has forfeited its honour and tarnished its flag.

"If this act be consummated, it would be vain for the English to talk of their good faith, of their laws, of their liberty. British faith would be lost in the hospitality of the *Bellerophon.*

"I appeal to history. She will tell how an enemy, who warred for twenty years against the English people, came of his own free will, in the day of his ill fortune, to seek an asylum beneath her laws. What greater proof could he give of his esteem and trust? But what answer did England make to so much magnanimity? She pre-

tended to stretch out a hospitable hand to this enemy, and, when he delivered himself up in good faith, she sacrificed him! NAPOLEON."

England can well support anathemas of this kind. It is hardly possible to find anywhere, except in the memoirs dictated by the author of this protest, more skilful perversions of the truth. What rights had Napoleon except the right of the strongest? He had lost those rights when he lost his army, the sole foundation of his empire, as Caulaincourt told him. What can be more pitiful and undignified than this appeal against force by the man who, his whole life long, exercised, without stint, whatever force he could command against every one who resisted his will or thwarted his ambition? He had appealed to force for twenty years, and the force his acts aroused against him proved the stronger. He fell under the blow, and then appealed against the effect of the law he had applied relentlessly all his life. Nor was he, when once on board the *Bellerophon*, at the hearth of the British people. He was in custody of one of that people's armed servants. His was not the case of a Spaniard flying from the French legions in Spain, nor the case of a German flying from the French legions in Germany. He was not a political offender seeking an asylum in England—like Louis XVIII., Charles X., Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, or Louis Philippe. He was a public enemy, who, it must not be forgotten, sought the deck of the *Bellerophon* to escape capture by the Bourbons. Maitland was placed off Rochefort to prevent his escape. It is simply not true that any ambush was planned, as Napoleon insinuates, or that the Government gave Maitland orders to receive the ex-Emperor and his suite, except as prisoners. Wherefore, this insinuation and this assertion being false, the faith of Britain was not lost in the hospitality of the *Bellerophon*. He praises himself for his immense magnanimity. Observe

the touching picture he draws! He came freely to seek an asylum under our laws. Could he have given a more striking proof of his confidence and esteem? There are some men whose esteem is only skin deep and valueless, whose professed confidence in others cannot, for good reasons, be answered by confidence in them. Such a man was Napoleon. He has appealed solemnly to History; let History be his judge.

Better would it have been for him had he stood steadfastly by the last man of his devoted army, upon some battle-field of France, and died there. But not better for us, for Europe; for then something would have been wanting in the vast and bloody drama of which he was the hero —Retribution.

The *Northumberland* sailed on the 8th of August for St. Helena. "In passing the Cape of La Hogue," say the authors of the *Victoires et Conquêtes des Français*, "Napoleon recognized the shores of France. He saluted them at once, and stretching out his captive hands towards the coast, he was heard to cry, with a voice deeply moved—'Adieu, terre des braves! adieu, chère France! Quelques traîtres de moins, et tu serais encore la grande nation, et la maîtresse du monde!'"[1] And so he remained to the last, convinced that his misfortunes were caused by the treachery of others, and not by his own misdeeds! Of great men, and he stands in the first rank, Napoleon is the one least entitled to boast of his magnanimity, or to denounce others for inflicting upon him the full measure not of his public "misfortunes," but of his public crimes. "On voit dans la fin de Napoleon," says a French writer, "un châtiment providentiel, une legitime expiation." And the Frenchman, Republican though he be, speaks the truth. The simplicity

[1] Adieu, land of the brave! adieu, dear France! A few traitors less, and you would still be the Great Nation, and the Mistress of the World.

of his punishment makes it sublime. We leave him traversing, in an agony of mind which was not repentance, the wide waste of the Atlantic, bound for that solitary rock whereon his figure, gazing over the ocean, will stand for ever in the imaginations and consciences of men, as an example of Justice done!

APPENDICES.

APPENDICES.

I.

THE ARMY OF WELLINGTON.

1ST CORPS.—Commander, the PRINCE of ORANGE. Strength, 25,233 men and 48 guns.

Divided into four divisions: *i.e.*, 1°, commanded by Major-General COOKE, consisting of two brigades of Guards under Major-General *Maitland* and Major-General Sir *John Byng*: strength, 4,061. 3°, commanded by Lieut.-General Count ALTEN, consisting of a British brigade under Major-General Sir *Colin Halkett*; a brigade of the German Legion under Colonel *von Ompteda*; a Hanoverian brigade under Major-General Count *Kielmansegge*: strength, 6,970. 2°, Dutch-Belgian, commanded by General Baron DE PERPONCHER, consisting of two brigades under Major-General Count *de Bylandt* and Prince *Bernhard of Saxe Weimar*: strength, 7,533. 3°, Dutch-Belgian, commanded by Lieutenant-General Baron CHASSE, consisting of two brigades under Major-General *Ditmers* and Major-General *d'Aubremé*: strength, 6,669 men.

2ND CORPS.—Commander, Lieut.-General Lord HILL. Strength, 24,033 men and 40 guns.

Organized in three divisions: *i.e.*, 2°, Lieut.-General Sir HENRY CLINTON, consisting of three brigades: a British brigade under Major-General *Adam;* a brigade of the King's German Legion under Colonel *Du Plat;* a Hanoverian brigade under Colonel *Hugh Halkett:* strength, 6,833 men. 4°, commanded by Lieut.-General Sir CHARLES COLVILLE, consisting of two British brigades under Colonel *Mitchell* and Major-General *Johnstone,* and a Hanoverian brigade under Major-General Sir *James Lyon:* strength, 7,212. 1°, Dutch-Belgian, commanded by Lieut.-General STEDMANN, consisting of two brigades under Major-General *Hauw* and Major-General *Eerens:* strength, 6,389 men. A Dutch-Belgian Indian brigade under Lieut.-General ANTHING: strength, 3,583; was attached to the 2nd Corps.

RESERVE, under WELLINGTON'S own command, consisted of the 5°, 6°, and 7° divisions, the Reserve Artillery, the Brunswick Corps, the Hanoverian Reserve Corps, and the Nassau Contingent: strength, 32,796 men and 64 guns.

The 5° Division, commanded by Lieut.-General Sir THOMAS PICTON, consisted of two British brigades under Major-General Sir *James Kempt* and Major-General Sir *Denis Pack,* and a Hanoverian brigade under Colonel *von Vincke:* strength, 7,158 men. The 6° Division, commanded by Lieut.-General the Hon. Sir LOWRY COLE, consisted of a British brigade under Major-General Sir *John Lambert* and a Hanoverian brigade under Colonel *Best:* strength, 5,149 men.

CAVALRY.—Commanded by Lieut.-General the Earl of UXBRIDGE. This force consisted of seven brigades of British and German Legionary regiments, commanded by Major-General Lord *Edward Somerset*, Major-General Sir *William Ponsonby*, Major-General Sir *William Dornberg*, Major-General Sir *John Vandeleur*, Major-General Sir *Colquhoun Grant*, Major-General Sir *Hussey Vivian*, and Colonel Sir *F. von Arentschildt;* of a Hanoverian brigade under Colonel *von Estorff*, of two Brunswick regiments, and of three Dutch-Belgian brigades under Major-General *Trip*, Major-General *de Ghigny*, and Major-General *Van Merle:* strength, 14,482 men and 44 guns, the latter horse artillery.

TOTAL STRENGTH, including garrisons, engineers, &c., 105,950 men and 196 guns: *i.e.*, Infantry, 82,062; Cavalry, 14,482; Artillery, 8,166; Engineers, &c., 1,240.

II.

THE ARMY OF PRINCE BLUCHER.

1ST CORPS—Lieut.-General VON ZIETHEN. Four brigades of Infantry under *Von Steinmetz, Von Pirch II., Von Jagow*, and *Von Henkel:* strength, 27,887 men. Cavalry corps, commanded by Lieut.-General VON RÖDER, consisting of two brigades under *Von Treskow* and *Von Lützow:* strength, 1,925 men, 96 guns. Total strength, 30,831.

2ND CORPS.—General VON PIRCH I. Four brigades of

Infantry under *Von Tippelskirchen, Von Krafft, Von Brause,* and *Von Langen:* strength, 25,836 men. Cavalry corps, commanded by General VON JURGASS, consisting of three brigades under *Von Thünen,* Count *Schulenburg,* and *Von Sohr:* strength, 4,468; 80 guns. Total strength, 31,758.

3RD CORPS.—Lieut.-General VON THIELEMANN. Four brigades of Infantry under *Von Borcke, Von Kämpfen, Von Luck,* and *Von Stülpnagel:* strength, 20,611. Cavalry corps, commanded by General VON HOBE, consisting of two brigades under *Von der Marwitz* and Count *Lottum:* strength, 2,405; 48 guns. Total strength, 23,980.

4TH CORPS.—General Count BULOW. Four brigades of Infantry under *Von Hacke, Von Ryssel, Von Losthin,* and *Von Hiller:* strength, 25,381. Cavalry corps, commanded by Prince WILLIAM of PRUSSIA, consisting of three brigades under *Von Sydow,* Count *Schwerin,* and *Von Watzdorf:* strength, 3,081; 88 guns. Total strength, 30,328.

TOTAL STRENGTH OF THE ARMY: Infantry, 99,715; Cavalry, 11,879; Artillery, 5,303 = 116,897 men and 312 guns.[1]

[1] Colonel Charras has pointed out that these Prussian returns do not include the *personnel du grand parc,* and do not allow of a sufficient number of men per gun. Adding the former, and increasing the latter to thirty men per gun, he raises the total of the army to 124,074 men. This appears to be reasonable.

III.

THE ARMY OF NAPOLEON.

IMPERIAL GUARD.—Three divisions. The Old Guard under *Friant*, the Middle Guard under *Morand*, the Young Guard under *Duhesme*: strength, 13,026 men. Cavalry, under *Guyot* and *Lefebvre Desnouettes*, and 106 Gendarmes d'élite: strength, 3,795 men, 96 guns. Total, 20,884.

1ST INFANTRY CORPS.—Lieut.-General DROUET D'ERLON; consisting of four divisions under *Alix*, *Donzelot*, *Marcognet*, and *Durutte*: strength, 16,885 men. Light Cavalry under *Jacquinot*: strength, 1,506; 46 guns. Total, 19,939.

2ND INFANTRY CORPS.—Lieut.-General REILLE; consisting of four divisions under *Bachelu*, Prince *Jerome*, *Foy*, and *Girard*: strength, 20,635. Light Cavalry *Piré*; strength, 1,865; 46 guns. Total, 24,361.

3RD INFANTRY CORPS.—Lieut.-General VANDAMME; consisting of three divisions under *Lefol*, *Habert*, and *Berthezène*: strength, 16,851. Light Cavalry under *Domont*: strength, 1,017; 38 guns. Total, 19,160.

4TH INFANTRY CORPS.—Lieut.-General GERARD; consisting of three divisions under *Pécheux*, *Vichery*, and *Bourmont* [who, when he deserted, was replaced by *Hulot*]: strength, 12,800. Light Cavalry, under

Maurin [and afterwards *Vallin*]: strength, 1,623; 38 guns. Total, 15,995.

6TH INFANTRY CORPS.—Lieut.-General LOBAU; consisting of three divisions under *Simmer*, *Jeannin*, and *Teste*: strength, 9,218; no cavalry; 32 guns. Total, 10,465.

RESERVE CAVALRY.—Commanded by Marshal GROUCHY, consisting of—

1*st Corps*.—Commanded by Lieut.-General PAJOL, two divisions under *P. Soult* and *Subervie*: strength, 2,717; 12 guns. Total, 3,046.

2*nd Corps*.—Lieut.-General EXCELMANS, two divisions under *Strolz* and *Chastel*: strength, 3,220; 12 guns. Total, 3,515.

3*rd Corps*.—Lieut.-General KELLERMAN; two divisions under *L'Héritier* and *Roussel d'Urbal*: strength, 3,360; 12 guns. Total, 3,679.

4*th Corps*.—Lieut.-General MILHAUD; two divisions under *Wathier* and *Delort*: strength, 3,194; 12 guns. Total, 3,544.

Grand Parc, Engineers, &c., 3,500.

TOTAL OF THE ARMY.—128,088, and 344 guns; including 89,415 Infantry, 22,302 Cavalry, and 12,371 Artillery and Engineers.[1]

[1] These figures we have taken from the work of Colonel Charras. The returns usually followed are those printed in Tome IX. of the *Mémoires de Napoleon*. They are, however, based on a "Situation au 1er Juin, 1815;" the figures of Charras are derived from official returns from the several Infantry corps, dated the 10th of June; for the Guard, a return

IV.

BRITISH REGIMENTS AT WATERLOO.

CAVALRY.—1st Life Guards, 2nd Life Guards, Royal Horse Guards (Blues), 1st Dragoon Guards, 1st Royal Dragoons, 2nd Royal Dragoons (Scots Greys), 6th Dragoons (Inniskillings), 7th Hussars, 10th Hussars, 11th Light Dragoons, 12th Light Dragoons, 13th Light Dragoons, 15th Hussars, 16th Light Dragoons, 18th Hussars, 23rd Light Dragoons.

INFANTRY.—1st Foot Guards (2nd and 3rd battalions), Coldstream Guards (2nd battalion), 3rd Foot Guards (2nd battalion).

1st Foot (Royal Scots, 3rd battalion), 4th Foot (1st battalion), 14th Foot (3rd battalion), 23rd Foot (Royal Welsh Fusiliers, 1st battalion), 27th Foot (1st battalion), 28th Foot (1st battalion), 30th Foot (2nd battalion), 32nd Foot (1st battalion), 33rd Foot (1st battalion), 40th Foot (1st battalion), 42nd Highlanders (1st battalion), 44th Foot (2nd battalion), 51st Light Infantry, 52nd Light Infantry (1st battalion), 69th Foot (2nd

of the 13th of June; and for the Reserve Cavalry, returns of the 1st of June. The strength of the "grand parc" is estimated, and in the return for the Artillery of the Guard are included soldiers serving as auxiliaries, workmen, and engineers. These latter are also included in the returns furnished by Napoleon. The total of the army, according to him, was 122,491 men, and 350 guns. The difference, therefore, must be sought in the augmentation of the fighting force, and chiefly of the Infantry, between the 1st and the 10th of June.

battalion), 71st Light Infantry (1st battalion), 73rd Foot (2nd battalion), 79th Highlanders (1st battalion), 92nd Highlanders (1st battalion), 95th Rifles (2nd and 3rd battalions).

Royal Artillery.

V.

Could Marshal Grouchy have saved Napoleon from the disaster of the 18th of June?

The answer to this question can only be found in a series of conjectures.

1°. It has been argued that Grouchy, believing that some part of the Prussian army had retreated upon Wavre, should have marched from Gembloux at daybreak on the 18th, not upon Sart lez Walhain, but by Mont St. Guibert upon Moustier. It is assumed that, had he done so, he would have been on the left bank of the Dyle by half-past ten, and it is asserted that he could, from Moustier, have easily occupied the defiles of the Lasne, or have moved by Maransart upon Planchenoit. Would this movement upon Moustier have prevented the Prussians from taking part in the battle of Waterloo? The moment Grouchy's columns approached Mont St. Guibert, they would have been felt and seen by the Prusssan outposts. Grouchy could and did patrol to his right and gain no intelligence, feel no foe. The first step towards the Dyle would have brought him into contact with what we may call the tentacles of the Prussian army, thrown out in every direction on both banks of the Dyle. Blucher, then at Wavre, would have learned that a French corps was moving from Gembloux upon Mont St. Guibert. Its object, the bridges of Moustier and Ottignies, would have been at once divined. Blucher could

have counteracted the movement of the French marshal by moving two corps up the left bank of the Dyle, permitting Bulow to continue his march, and directing Thielemann to take the road to Ohain. Assuming that Blucher had timely information, and the alertness already displayed by his patrols warrants the assumption, there was nothing to prevent the arrival of Ziethen and Pirch I. at Moustier and Ottignies before the army of Grouchy could have crossed the river. These two corps would have been sufficient to stop Grouchy. But admit that information arrived too late. Then Grouchy, over the Dyle, would have found himself in the presence of two corps marching to attack him. In this case he must have fought, and to have fought he must have halted. In the meantime, Bulow and Thielemann would have joined Wellington. That two Prussian corps could have intercepted him, either at Moustier or between the Dyle and the Lasne, is certain, because the distance from Gembloux to Moustier, in a direct line, is twice the distance from Moustier to Wavre by the road. Had Grouchy escaped them, and, gaining the road to Maransart, sought to join the right of Napoleon, then three-fourths of the Prussian force would, in the same time, have concentrated on Napoleon's right rear. The result of the 18th would have been more stupendous, for Grouchy's army would have shared the defeat.

2°. It is said that had Grouchy, starting from Gembloux even at eight in the morning, moved direct upon Moustier by Mont St. Guibert, he would have caught Bulow *flagrante delicto*. But the same reasoning applies to this supposition as to the first, with this difference, that Grouchy would have been opposed by Pirch I. and Thielemann, while Bulow and Ziethen moved on their way to Waterloo. Bulow, in that case, could only have been reached through the Prussian corps which covered him—that is, after a

battle. With the happiest luck Grouchy could not have crossed the Dyle earlier than four o'clock, and the reader may imagine whether in three or four hours Grouchy could have defeated two Prussian corps, marched afterwards six or eight miles through a rough and roadless country, and have arrived in time to save Napoleon.

3°. It is said that had the counsel of Gérard been adopted, Napoleon would have been saved; that Grouchy, when at Sart lez Walhain, and knowing, as he did then, that the whole Prussian army was at Wavre in the morning, should have turned the heads of his columns to the left, and, hastening the march of his cavalry, have seized Moustier, while Pajol and Teste moved upon Wavre to deceive the enemy. Here, again, he would encounter his three great foes—time, the want of roads, and the Prussian patrols. His movement to the left would have been seen at once. While he struggled across country, watched and harassed by the Prussian light troops, the troops then at Wavre, under Pirch and Thielemann, would not have remained there, but would, by shorter lines than those by which Grouchy could march, have gained the left bank of the Dyle west of Moustier, and have interposed between Grouchy and Napoleon. In this case, none of the Prussian troops which reached Waterloo would have been diverted from that field, and Grouchy would have been opposed by those only which took no part in that battle.

4°. But it is argued that Blucher, seeing so large a force approaching Moustier, would have hesitated, vacillated, and in the end have failed to give Wellington efficient aid. The answer to this argument is—the *character* of Blucher. Who can believe that a man, proverbial for audacity carried to the extreme of rashness sometimes, would have been prevented from hastening to the field where the grand game was being played? He would have known that it would

be enough to parry Grouchy while he struck a fatal blow at Napoleon.

The truth is that, on the morning of the 18th, the facts of the situation, if we may be allowed the phrase, rendered it impossible for Grouchy to prevent the junction of Wellington and Blucher. One fact alone ought to settle the question for ever. Grouchy, at Gembloux, was separated from Napoleon at La Belle Alliance by more than twice the distance which separated Blucher from Wellington. No manœuvring could have made the lines of march shorter. Four Prussian corps d'armée were nearer to Wellington than two French corps d'armée were to Napoleon. Moreover, one half the Prussian force could, if needed, have been thrown upon Grouchy's army at some point in any line of march he might have selected. Still further, Wellington and Blucher were executing a well-defined concerted plan, and were in close communication. The reverse was the case with Napoleon and Grouchy. Turn it which way we may, consider it as a question of generalship, or one of time and distance, and we arrive at the same conclusion. It was, on the morning of the 18th, beyond the power of Grouchy to alter materially the result of the battle of Waterloo. This, however, does not exonerate him from the charges of not having patrolled to his left, and of not having tried at least to cross the Dyle at Moustier and Ottignies: nor does it exonerate him from the charge of having clumsily conducted the battle of Wavre.

We must seek elsewhere than in the conduct of Grouchy on the 18th for the faults which enabled the Allies to crush Napoleon. We must turn to the 17th. For the delays and mistakes of that day Grouchy is not responsible. It was not he who allowed the Prussians to slip away from the field of Ligny unperceived; it was not he who permitted the patrols of Wellington, in broad daylight, to

communicate with the Prussians near Sombref itself; it was not Grouchy who selected the hour of his own departure, nor was it he who chose the direction of his march. It was the Emperor who sent him too late, and who, when he did send him, gave him a false direction. Grouchy must bear the burden of his own mistakes; but every just mind will exonerate him from those which were committed by his great master.

THE END.

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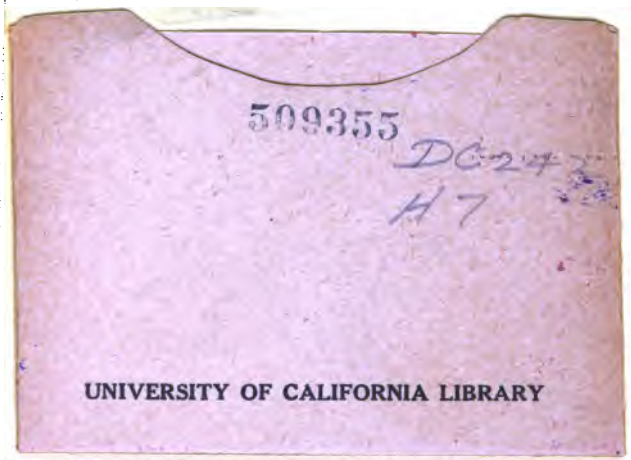
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